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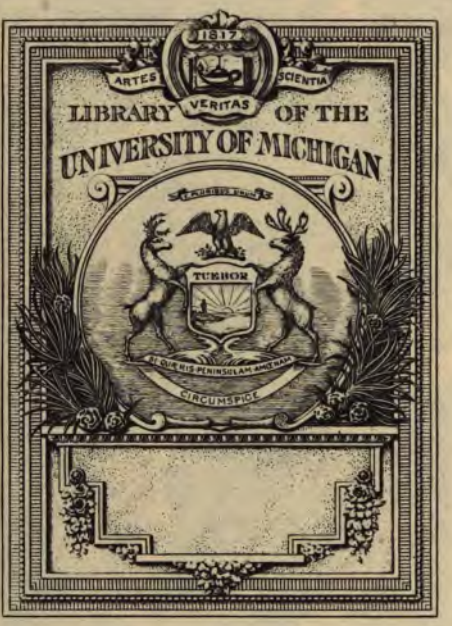
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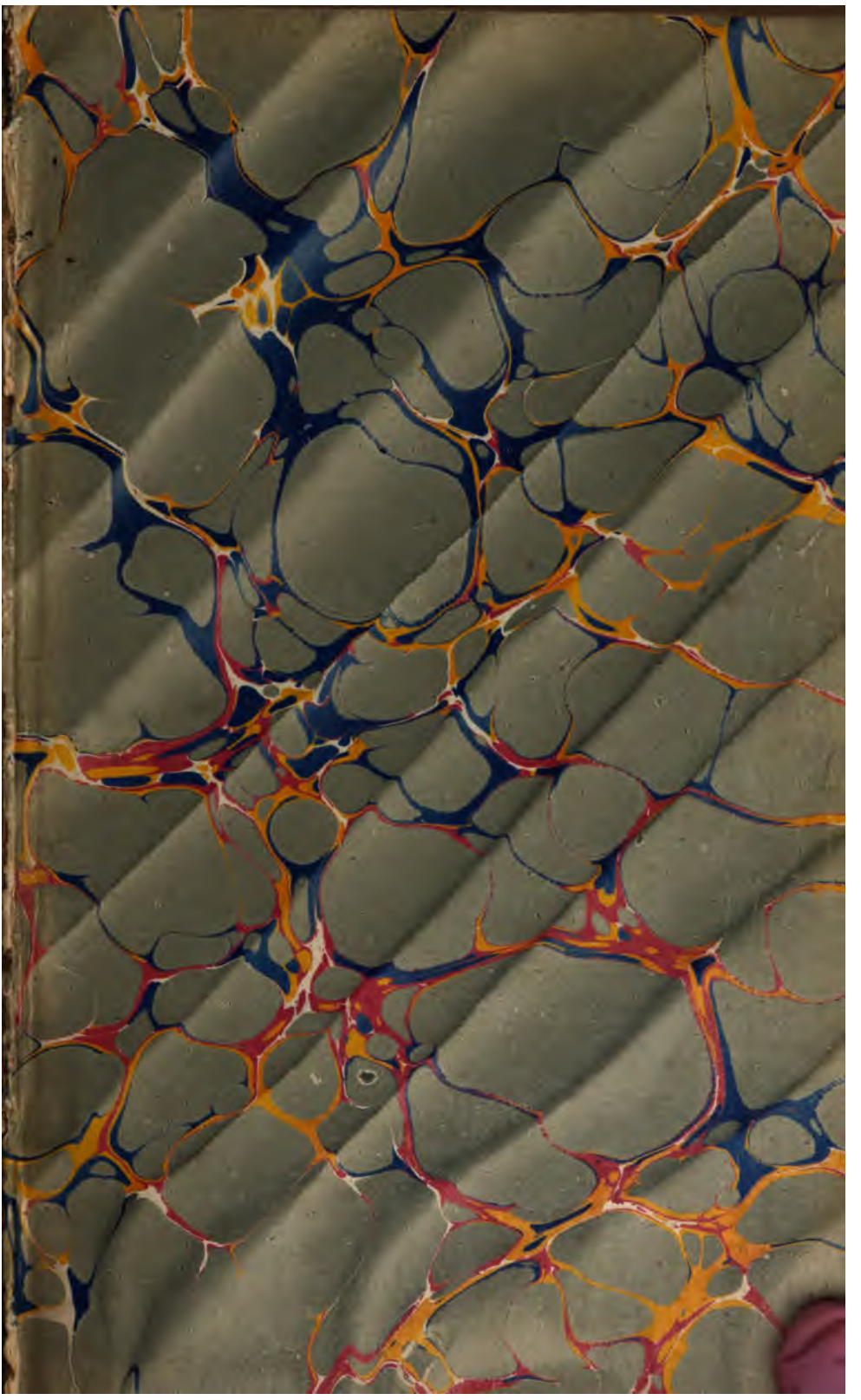

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E. Margaret Humphreys.
March 1944.

THE

CAMBRIAN PLUTARCH;

COMPRISING

MEMOIRS

OF

SOME OF THE MOST EMINENT WELSHMEN,

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT.

By JOHN H. PARRY, Esq.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

In offering the following work to the public, it is impossible for the author not to be influenced by a more than ordinary anxiety respecting its fate. His own comparative inexperience as a public writer, and the consciousness he unaffectedly feels of his imperfections in this respect, might of themselves be sufficient to justify this solicitude. But there are other circumstances that serve, in a material degree, to augment the apprehension he entertains as to the favourable reception of the Cambrian Plutarch, and which require some preliminary notice.

It is a fact not to be questioned, that a remarkable degree of ignorance prevails respecting the literature and history of that portion of our island, in which such of the aboriginal race, as had survived the repeated shocks of foreign invasion, sought their last asylum from the swords of their enemies. While the national peculiarities, whether in manners or literature, of Scotland and Ireland, have been industriously explored, and, in many instances, successfully developed, Wales has been

regarded with an indifference not easily to be reconciled with that spirit of enterprise, by which the literary republic of Great Britain is known to be animated. Some efforts, it is true, have been made to describe the peculiar habits and customs of the Welsh; but, in most instances, these, instead of being faithful portraits, have been mere idle caricatures. The writers have, for the most part, enjoyed few or none of those advantages which are indispensable to a just delineation of national characteristics, and many of them have been content to adopt, without examination, the imperfect or distorted sketches of others. To these and similar causes it is owing that so much indifference, to speak generally, has been manifested towards any thing relating to the national features of Wales. The public have judged, upon grounds sufficiently plausible, that a country, of which so little that is interesting has hitherto been divulged, can possess but few resources either for their instruction or entertainment.

A more auspicious light, indeed, seems recently to have dawned upon the cause of Welsh literature; and, if it has not as yet been the means of extending the knowledge of it in any material degree, it has apparently awakened a more general interest in its behalf. This, at least, is true of the natives of Wales themselves, who seem at length to have emerged from the ungenial apathy,

by which they had been too long overwhelmed. Yet, much remains to be done before the cause, in which they have associated, can make any important progress beyond the confines of the Principality. It is not sufficient that Welshmen have at last learned to appreciate the value of their ancient literary remains, whether of history or of poetry. In order to do full justice to their national literature, in order to make it an object of interest to others, they should divest it of its native garb, and present it to the world in a form more qualified to allure the general reader. At present, Englishmen have few or no means of estimating the justice of that enthusiasm, with which the names of Taliesin, Hywel Dda, or Llywelyn, are hailed on the soil of their birth; and they may well be excused if they continue sceptical in a cause, of which they are not placed in a situation to judge.

Such are the circumstances, presenting a mixture of discouragement and of hope, under which the present work issues from the press; and there is reason to believe, that it is the first effort to combine, under one view, any enlarged biographical notices of the more eminent natives of the Principality. On this account it may perhaps be received with indulgence: the author at least hopes, that it will not be condemned with unreflecting severity.

The lives embraced in this volume, the reader will perceive, are arranged in a chronological order, commencing with the beginning of the sixth century,—a considerable time indeed before the dominion of the Cymry, or Ancient Britons, was exclusively confined to Wales, but still long after the period when they first took possession of that country. Arthur, the first name on the list, may possibly startle those, who have derived their only knowledge of that individual from the fabulous legends, of which he is the hero; but it is proper to add, that none of these were consulted on the occasion of writing the present brief memoir, which is drawn, almost entirely, from such sources as have ever been deemed of sufficient authenticity by those, to whom the ancient historical notices of Wales are familiar.

Independently of the avowed historical resources, of which use has been made in this volume, there are others that may not appear quite so obvious to the general reader. Of these the chief are the ancient Welsh poems and Triads. Some observations on the more remarkable features of the former will be found in the Life of Aneurin; and from these it will be seen, that, as historical documents, where they are connected with the events of the times, the effusions of the ancient bards have a value, which does not, in general, belong to productions of this nature. With re-

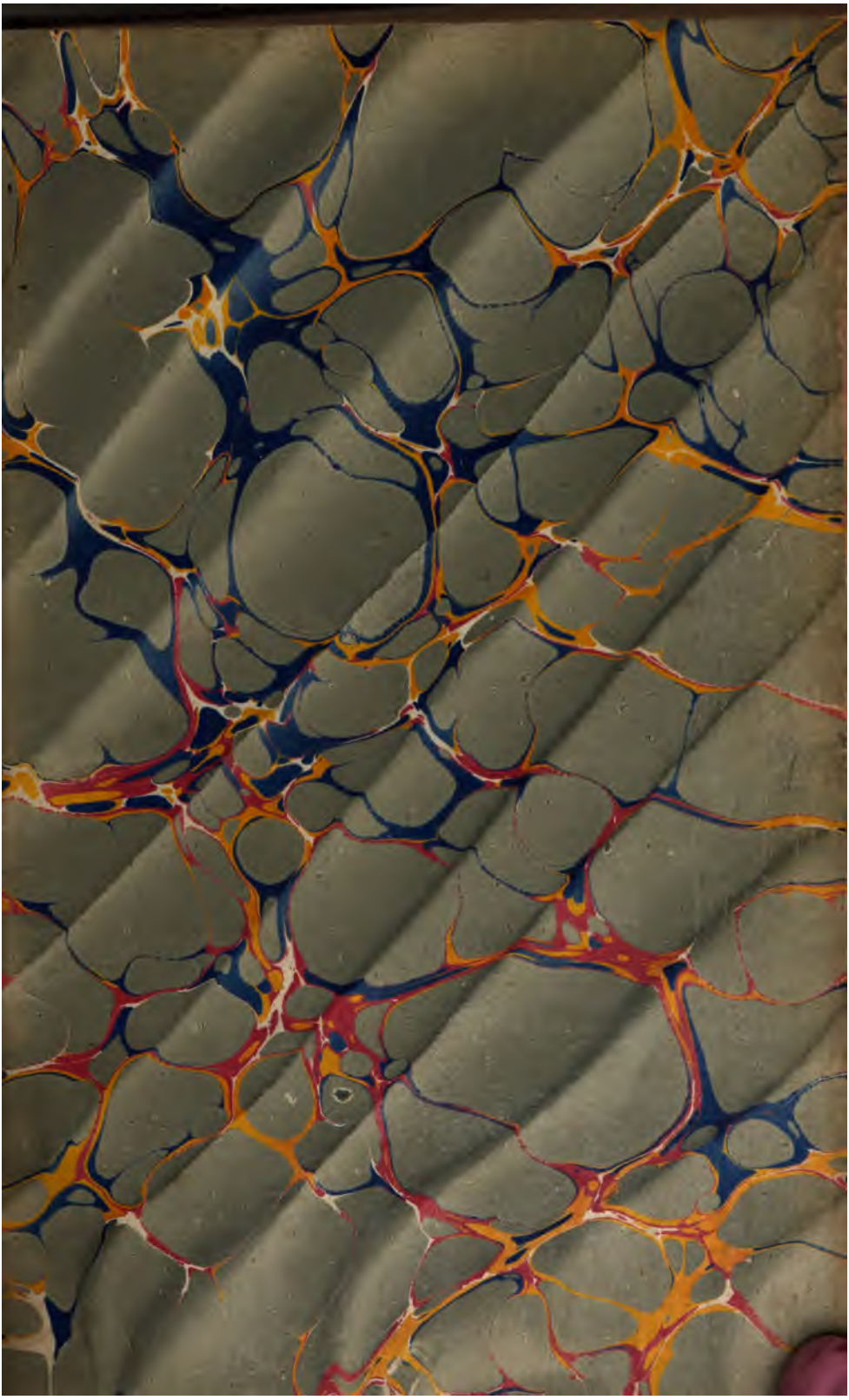
spect to the Triads, which are perhaps peculiar to Welsh literature, they embody, in their quaint form, some of the earliest traditions relating to the history of this island; and, as they are confirmed, in numerous instances, by other authorities, an equal credit may, without difficulty, be conceded to them in those, in which such confirmation is wanting. Wherever, therefore, any notices connected with this work have been found in the Triads, the author has not hesitated to avail himself of them; yet these are not numerous, and relate, as will be seen, to the earliest lives. In a word, with reference to the two sources of information now alluded to, poetry, among the Cymry, had, for ages, anticipated the functions of history, and in the Triads were often preserved what might not admit of diffusion in the strains of the bard. These phenomena, in ancient Welsh literature, had apparently their origin in the Bardic, or Druidical Institution, of which the encouragement of oral tradition, whether by songs or aphorisms, formed a prominent characteristic.

The reader must not conclude, that the following pages embrace all that is worthy of record in the biographical annals of Wales. The few names to which they are confined form a selection out of a considerable number, most of them equally worthy of the pen of the biographer. But the author's plan was originally of a limited nature, and

the chronological arrangement he had adopted made it unexpectedly necessary, in the progress of the work, to curtail it still more. The consequence has been, that many lives of interest have been excluded, which, however, if the present humble attempt should be favourably received, may serve to form a supplementary volume.

It may be necessary also to premise, that, in making the selection for this work, regard was paid to such individuals only as had, in some respect or other, identified themselves with the land of their birth, by a promotion of its literary or political interests. Accordingly, many natives of Wales, who have eminently distinguished themselves in other countries, but whose labours have in no way been conducive to the immediate interests of their own, have not been considered as being embraced within the design of the CAMBRIAN PLUTARCH. If any apparent exceptions to these remarks should be found, they must be ascribed to some peculiarity of circumstances, that influenced the mind of the writer, and which it might be tedious here to explain.

There is one feature of this work, which, probably, will not pass unnoticed. This is the great number of notes, which, according to the particular taste of the reader, may be regarded either as a blemish or an advantage. The truth, however, is, that the author would gladly have dispensed



E. Morgan Humphreys.
March 1944.

THE

CAMBRIAN PLUTARCH.

ARTHUR.

To rescue truth from the embraces of fiction, and to erect on the ruins of fable the fair edifice of genuine history, must be, at all times, a work of no little hazard. And the task acquires a peculiar difficulty, when it concerns those legendary productions, in which our infancy has been wont to delight, and which are accordingly associated with our earliest prepossessions. The visions of childhood are not easily dissipated; for, whatever may be the influence of a maturer experience, it is not without reluctance that the mind emancipates itself from the spell of its former illusions. Where the genius of Romance has spread around her gorgeous creation, we love to linger near the visionary scene—we hold enraptured converse with all its fantastic population, and, when, at length, the charm is dissolved, we are loath to acknowledge those beings as merely human, whom we have been accustomed to regard as little less than divine.

There can be no case more strongly illustrative of the justice of these observations than the history of the renowned Arthur; enveloped, as it has been, in the splendid disguises of chivalry, and in the extravagant decorations of romantic or mythological lore. To strip our hero of these delusive ornaments, and to present him to the world in his

real character—not as the triumphant invader of distant countries*—not as the conqueror of giants and kingdoms —not as the possessor of every human excellence, and even of supernatural powers†, but merely as a warrior, distinguished indeed by his valour and his successes, but not otherwise exalted above his contemporaries—is an undertaking of no common risk. Those, who have from their cradle been taught to admire

> ——————— what resounds
> In fable or romance of Uther's son,
> Begirt with British and Armoric knights,

will hardly descend to contemplate that same individual, as one exposed to the ordinary vicissitudes of fortune, and pretending to no other reputation than what belongs to the warlike champion of an uncivilized age. Yet at last we may say, with an ingenious writer, that, "when all fictions" in the life of Arthur "are removed, and when those incidents only are retained, which the sober criticism of his-

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* Among the countries, which Arthur is reported by Geoffrey of Monmouth and others to have subdued, are Ireland, Denmark, Norway, and Palestine, from which latter place he is modestly recorded to have brought away the holy cross as a trophy. The visions of these romancers are effectually dispelled by the more sober testimony of the ancient bards and the Triads.

† There is no virtue, actual or ideal, with which the legendary biographers of Arthur have not adorned his romantic character. Geoffrey of Monmouth, with a hyperbolical profaneness, asserts, that "God hath not created, since the time of Adam, a man more perfect than Arthur; and that this perfection was bestowed upon him by God, as an inherent virtue from his birth." Yet even this eulogium is outdone by Joseph of Exeter, who, in his *Antiocheis*, ascribes to our hero a superiority not only over all former excellence, but over all that may possibly exist hereafter. These are his words:—

> ——— reges supereminet omnes
> Solus; præteritis melior *majorque futuris*.

tory sanctions with its approbation, a fame, ample enough to interest the judicious and to perpetuate his honourable memory, will still continue to bloom*."

Arthur was the son of Meirig ab Tewdrig, a prince of the Silurian Britons at the commencement of the sixth century, and who is, in all probability, to be identified with our hero's reputed sire, Uthyr, or Uther, of legendary celebrity. For the custom of adopting assumed appellations was by no means unusual with the Britons of that age; and hence the epithet of *Uthyr*, or Wonderful, may naturally have been appropriated to Meirig, whose exploits, in his wars with the Saxons, appear to have given him a claim to such a distinction†. And it has been plausibly surmised, that the name of Arthur was likewise of the same nature, borrowed, perhaps, from some fabulous hero, before eminent in the traditions of the country; and thus may have originated those extraneous embellishments, which have served to obscure the true history. Nor is it unworthy of notice, that *Arthur* is, in Welsh, synonymous with the constellation of *Ursa Major*, a coincidence, to which we may probably trace some of the mythological properties, with which the character of this ambiguous personage has been invested‡. But, whatever may have been the original appellation of the celebrated son of Meirig, the only one, that history has

* Turner's "History of the Anglo-Saxons," vol. i. p. 230.

† The other name of *Pendragon*, applied to *Uthyr*, denotes a supreme leader or ruler, and has no reference, as Camden and others have imagined, either to the "serpentine subtlety" of that chieftain, or to the emblem borne on his banners.

‡ Another constellation, that of *Lyra*, also bears, in Welsh, the name of the Silurian chieftain. It is called *Telyn Arthur*, the Harp of Arthur. Yet it is more than probable, that it had this designation long before Arthur's existence, and that it meant, originally, the Harp of the Great Bear, as the words literally imply.

transmitted to us, is that, under which he is here presented to the reader.

Of the mother of Arthur we have no certain account; for the assertion of Geoffrey of Monmouth, that he was the offspring of an illicit intercourse between his father and a Cornish princess, does not appear to be deserving of much credit*. We learn, however, from some ancient Welsh records, that he had a sister, named Anna, who was married to Llew, a brother of Urien, a distinguished chief of the Cumbrian Britons, during that warlike and turbulent age. It was this Anna, that gave birth to Medrod, who was destined by his unnatural treason to have so fatal an influence, as we shall hereafter see, on the fortunes of his renowned uncle.

According to some writers, Arthur first saw the light at Tindagel in Cornwall, a country at that time inhabited by a people of kindred extraction and language with the natives of Wales, and united with them in one common league against the Saxons. It is not improbable, therefore, that the events of the times may have led Meirig to reside occasionally with his family among the Cornish Britons, who may have marched to battle under his banners, as they afterwards did under those of his son. For, whether Arthur was a native or not of this part of the kingdom, he is re-

* The intercourse, here noticed, was carried on, as Geoffrey affirms, by the magical contrivance of Merlin, who enabled Uthyr to assume the form of the princess's husband, Gorlois. John Hauvillan, an Anglo-Latin poet, has the following allusion to this happy stratagem:—

——— Facie dum falsus adulter
Tindagel irrupuit, nec amoris Pendragon æstum
Vincit, et omnificus Merlini consulit artes,
Mentiturque ducis habitus, et, rege latente,
Induit absentis præsentia Gorlois ora.

corded, in the Historical Triads, to have had a supreme court in Cornwall, at a place called Celliwig; the identity of which with Tindagel has been conjectured, yet more, perhaps, from a desire to favour the tradition respecting the place of his birth, than upon any more satisfactory grounds*.

Of the juvenile years and early education of Arthur we have no particular memorials. That he was soon initiated in those martial pursuits, in which he afterwards excelled, may be inferred, as well from the manners of that period, as from the early age, at which he was elected to the chief sovereignty of the Britons. And we may conclude, that some attention was likewise paid to his religious instruction, from the circumstance that his father evinced a remarkable zeal in the cause of Christianity, which he considerably promoted amongst his countrymen, by the erection of a college at Llancarvan in South Wales. And the concurrence of all the popular legends relating to Arthur, in ascribing to him the same laudable spirit in a pre-eminent degree, communicates to the foregoing surmise an additional weight.

About the year 517 Arthur was called to take the supreme command of his countrymen against the growing dominion of the Saxons, and that too by a general suffrage, such as had, in earlier times, conferred a similar distinction on Cassivellaunus and Caractacus, when, in the hour of emergency, they were selected to oppose the powerful arms of Rome†. According to some authorities, Arthur was, at

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* Celliwig has likewise been attempted to be identified both with Lestwithiel and Pendennis Castle. But the truth is now, most probably, beyond the reach of conjecture.

† We have the express testimony of Cæsar, that Cassivellaunus, or Caswallon, was thus elected. See *Bell. Gall.* l. v. c. 9. And with respect to Caradog, the celebrated Caractacus of the Roman writers, he is described

this time, no more than fifteen years of age; but, as he is recorded to have exercised, for several years before, the sovereign power over his patrimonial territory in South Wales, it is probable, that, although young, he must have been of a maturer age than that assigned to him at the period alluded to. He is recorded, on this occasion, to have been invested with the insignia of royalty, with great pomp and solemnity, at Caerlleon on Usk, by Dyvrig, or Dubricius, Archbishop of Llandav, and in the presence of several British princes, who were, probably, thus convened to give their sanction to the national vote*. Whatever credit may be due to this account, it is still certain that Arthur was, at an early period of life, entrusted with a pre-eminent military command, and owing, we may reasonably conclude, to the experience his countrymen already possessed of his talents and courage.

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by Tacitus as one, "quem multa ambigua, multa prospera extulerant, ut cæteros Britannorum imperatores præmineret."—*Annal.* l. xii. c. 33. They are both, moreover, recorded in the Historical Triads, as having been raised to the sovereignty by the public vote. See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 168.

* Among the writers who have adopted or embellished the legend of Geoffrey relating to this event, are Matthew of Westminster, Leland, and Churchyard, in his "Worthiness of Wales;" the first of whom thus speaks of the reputation in which Arthur was held when thus raised to sovereign rank: "Erat," he says, "tam inauditæ virtutis atque largitatis, unde tantam gratiam promeruit, ut à cunctis et etiam ab hostibus commendaretur." Churchyard enumerates four kings, those of "Albania, Venedocia, Cornwall, and Dimetia," as forming part of the royal procession on this occasion, each bearing in his hand a golden sword; and their queens, he adds, in like manner, carried four white doves. He, moreover, introduces twelve "discreet personages of reverend countenance," bearing olive boughs in token of their "ambassage" from the Roman general, Lucius Tiberius, on whose behalf they were come to demand of Arthur the tribute withheld from the Romans since the time of Julius Cæsar. Such are the fantastic flowers, with which fiction delights to wreathe the chaste brows of history.

From the time that Arthur was thus raised to the chief dominion over his countrymen, it is reasonable to presume, that the distracted state of the times must have involved him in much war and bloodshed. His whole life, indeed, from the period alluded to, was, in all probability, a continued series of martial achievements. For, in the north of England, in Wales, and in Cornwall, the Britons, or Cymry*, were still in sufficient force to resist, as they often did with signal advantage, the incursions of their Saxon invaders. Nennius, who in his *Historia Brittonum* has given a brief outline of the exploits of Arthur, enumerates twelve battles, in which he commanded against the Saxons, and in all of which he ascribes the victory to the British chief. The orthographical obscurities of this writer, however, owing either to his own ignorance or to the carelessness of transcribers, render it impossible, in most instances, to speak with any degree of certainty of the local situation of these engagements. The learned historian of Manchester has made an able attempt towards the illustration of some of them; but too much doubt still hangs over the subject to admit of the unqualified adoption of Mr. Whitaker's ingenious conjectures†.

But, although it would be extremely hazardous to place implicit reliance on the authority of Nennius in this instance, it may be collected from other less questionable sources, that Arthur was engaged in several conflicts as well against

* The English reader should here be apprised, that *Cymry* is the name by which the Welsh have distinguished themselves from time immemorial. It implies a first or aboriginal people, and is pronounced as if written *Kumry*. It may also be necessary to inform the Welsh reader, that, in compliance with popular usage, the term Britons is often employed in these pages, where Cymry would have been more strictly correct.

† See the History of Manchester, vol. ii. p. 31, &c. for an interesting, though hypothetical, narrative of the wars of Arthur.

domestic foes as against the common enemy. The most important of those fought with the latter is allowed by the concurrent testimony of most early writers to have been the battle of Badon Hill as it is commonly called, fought in the vicinity of Bath*. According to most authorities, this was also the first engagement of note, which Arthur had with the Saxons, although it occurs last in the list given by Nennius. Bede, however, a more authentic as well an earlier writer, and who is followed by Usher, fixes this battle in the year five hundred and twenty, about three years after the presumed era of Arthur's election to the sovereign command. The Saxons, on this occasion, were led by the brave Cerdic, who in the preceding year, according to the Saxon Chronicle, had gained considerable advantages over the Britons at a place thence called Cerdicsford, now Chardford, in Hampshire. It is by no means improbable, that these successes of Cerdic may have roused the Britons to more vigorous exertions, which terminated with their triumph at Badon. And this agrees with the testimony of an ancient Welsh poem, which, in allusion to the event, has the following lines:—

Woe to the miserable ones, on account of the battle of Badon!
Arthur was at the head of the valiant with their blood red blades;
He revenged on his foes the blood of his warriors,
Warriors, who had been the defence of the sovereigns of the north.

The prodigies of personal valour, ascribed by Nennius

* Some writers, without any foundation, have placed the scene of this battle in the north; but we would rather agree with Camden, who says, it was fought near the hill now called "Bannesdown, hanging over the little village of Bathstone, and shewing in his day," as he tells us, "its bulwarks and rampire." And it is no small proof of this being the Badon alluded to, that the adjacent vale on the Avon bears still among the Welsh the name of *Nant Badon*, or the Valley of Badon.

to Arthur on this occasion, belong more to fable than history*. But, as it is recorded, that, in a treaty concluded with Cerdic after the engagement, the supremacy of the British chieftain was fully acknowledged, the decisive character of the battle may easily be inferred. It secured to him, in all probability, the independence of his dominions on both banks of the Severn.

It is impossible to enumerate, in their proper order, any of the other battles of Arthur, that intervened between the one just noticed, and the fatal conflict of Camlan. Many, no doubt, were fought as well in the general warfare against the Saxons, as in the civil dissensions amongst the Britons themselves. Two are specified by Llywarch Hên, or Llywarch the Aged, an eminent Welsh bard and a contemporary. One of these was fought at Llongborth, and the other upon the Llawen; but the precise situation in both cases is involved in considerable obscurity. Llongborth was some harbour in the southern coast of England; and an ingenious writer† identifies it with Portsmouth, and supposes the battle in question to have been that fought with Porta on his first landing at that place. That the engagement, with whomsoever fought, took place after Arthur had been raised to the sovereign power, may be clearly inferred from the expression of the poet above alluded to, who says—

> At Llongborth were slain to Arthur
> Valorous heroes, who hewed down with steel,
> The emperor was he and chief conductor of the toil of war.

And, from his general description of the contest, it must

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* "In this engagement," quoth Nennius with all the gravity of a veracious historian, "nine hundred and forty fell by his own hand alone, no one but the Lord affording him assistance."—See Gunn's Translation, p. 36.

† Mr. Turner, in his History of the Anglo-Saxons.

have been of a most obstinate character; for he adverts to "men engaged with blood to their knees," and to "biers loaded with innumerable slain:"—expressions, that, with all due allowance for poetical embellishment, must be taken as indicative of a fierce and sanguinary encounter. We are not expressly informed of the event of the battle; but the general tenour of the poem seems to favour the presumption, that Arthur and his followers were triumphant. Of the other conflict, which took place on the Llawen, a river most probably in North Britain, by some supposed to be the Leven, and by others the Lon, we have but a scanty notice, and even that in some respect questionable, as it regards Arthur. It occurs in a passage in which the bard has an apparent allusion to one of his sons as having fought under the British champion upon this occasion*.

Although, at this distance of time, we cannot pretend to particularize the numerous actions in which Arthur signalized himself against the enemies of his country, we are justified by the general voice of history in ascribing to him a pre-eminent character in this point of view. In addition to Llywarch, already quoted, two other contemporary poets, Taliesin and Merddin, are loud in his praise as a successful warrior and a distinguished commander. Nor is it any detraction from his reputation in this respect, that he was occasionally foiled by the bravery or skill of his adversaries. Cerdic, in particular, to whom it may be presumed he was opposed, even after the combat at Badon Hill, is allowed

* The passage in question is to be found in Llywarch's Poem on his Old Age, in which he speaks of one of his sons as having fought on the Llawen, when "Arthur did not retreat;" but, as there is a different reading of the original, which excludes all notice of Arthur, the authority is by no means decisive.—See Owen's Translation of the "*Heroic Elegies of Llywarch Hên*," p. 130.

frequently to have fought under happier auspices, and to have derived new energy even from his defeats*. But it was not against dexterity and valour alone that Arthur had to contend: he had to oppose the more dangerous machinations of treachery and of treason.

Among the Britons of this age, of whom we have any memorials, the name of Medrod† has been handed down with peculiar infamy. He was a native of the northern part of the island, and a nephew of Arthur, being, as already incidentally noticed, the son of his sister Anna. Early in life, as it would seem, Medrod was admitted into the court of Arthur, where he became remarkable not less for his insinuating address than for his personal prowess. It is probable, therefore, that these qualities served to ingratiate him with his uncle, whose friendship and confidence he appears to have enjoyed in a distinguished degree. For during the absence of Arthur on one occasion, probably in one of his military campaigns‡, Medrod was entrusted with the regency, and basely availed himself of the power he thus possessed to plot the destruction of his friend and kinsman. He accordingly entered into a conspiracy with another traitor named Iddog, who appears to have been alike privy to the plans and counsels of Arthur, and to have been equally ready to abuse the confidence he had ac-

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* Hence the author of the *Polychronium* observes of Cerdic, "si semel vinceretur, aliâ vice acrior surrexit ad pugnam."

† Erroneously called Modred by almost all English writers.

‡ Arthur, according to some of his fabulous biographers, was, on this occasion, absent in Armorica; according to others, he was marching for Rome. It is safer to presume, however, that, while Medrod was thus engaged in his traitorous enterprise in Cornwall, the British chieftain was employed against the Saxons in some other part of the island, and most probably in the north, which was, for a long period, the scene of the most obstinate struggles between the British and Saxon forces.

quired*. The secret confederacy thus formed soon ripened into open hostility; and there is reason to infer, that Medrod was able to seduce to his cause no inconsiderable number of his countrymen, too willing in that turbulent age to swell the ranks of violence and dissension.

Medrod's first act of aggression, after this proof of his villainy and ingratitude, was to lay waste the royal domains of Arthur in Cornwall; and this he is represented to have done in so effectual a manner as to have left nothing unconsumed that was capable of being destroyed. And, that his baseness might not want its consummation, he is recorded to have forced Gwenhwyvar, the wife of Arthur, into a compliance with his incestuous passion. The perfidy of Medrod, however, did not remain long without its reward; for Arthur, upon receiving intelligence of it, took ample reprisals upon the patrimonial possessions of the traitor in the north, destroying, with an unsparing hand, whatever presented itself to the fury of his revenge. Both these events are recorded in the Historical Triads, and are by no means inconsistent with the lawless spirit of an age, in which social rights were too often made subservient to the gratification of every disorderly passion. Yet, agreeably with the ancient usages of the Britons, the country was bound to indemnify the aggrieved from the effects of such public enormities; and hence the acts of violence above related are

* This person is called Iddog Corn Prydain in the Triads, where he is twice recorded for this act of baseness. The conference between him and Medrod, at which their plans were formed, is described to have been held at a place called Nanhwynain.—See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. pp. 171 and 203. Iddog afterwards embraced a religious life, as if to atone, by an appearance of piety, for the treachery of which he had been previously guilty. His name is accordingly to be found enrolled amongst those of the British Saints.

enumerated in the Triads among the "dear devastations of the Isle of Britain*."

This reciprocity of private outrage was soon followed by more general hostilities; for Medrod, exasperated, as we may presume, by the summary chastisement which his traitorous conduct had so justly entailed upon him, united his forces with those of the Saxons. And it is probable, as assumed in the popular legends of Arthur, that this unnatural league was the source of several engagements between the Britons and Saxons, in which the former were victorious, previously to the last important conflict, which determined at once the power and the life of the British warrior.

Whatever uncertainty may hang over any other portion of the memorials of Arthur, it seems to be placed beyond a doubt, that he closed his career in the battle of Camlan, fought, according to the most probable calculation, about the year 542. The ancient Welsh writings, whether poetical or historical, concur in the statement of this event, which is also adopted by all English authors of any credit†. Different opinions, however, have existed as to the situation of Camlan, some placing it in the North of England, and others in Cornwall. But, the balance of authorities is decidedly in favour of the latter conjecture; and it may be assumed as an historical fact, that the country of Arthur's nativity was also the scene of his death,—

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* For a translation of the Triad, in which these acts of mutual violence are recorded, see the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. ii. p. 50.

† The works of Taliesin and the Triads abound in notices of this event. See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 204. and vol. ii. pp. 218 and 435. Leland, Camden, and the generality of English writers, have also arrived at the same conclusion.

As though no other place in Britain's spacious earth
Were worthy of his end but where he had his birth*.

This battle is described to have been of a most sanguinary nature, and, according to the Triads, three only survived its destructive ravages†. But, although the names of these survivors are particularly specified, it is safer to presume that there is some degree of exaggeration in the statement, which may merely be meant to denote the desolating consequences of the conflict. However, be this as it may, the traitor Medrod suffered, on this occasion, the penalty so justly due to his perfidious conduct. He fell on the field, but not before his illustrious and injured rival had also received his death-wound, and that, according to some accounts, from the very hand of his treacherous kinsman. It is also recorded in the Triads, that the fatal issue of this battle, as it concerned Arthur, was chiefly owing to an impolitic division, or exchange, that he made of his forces with Medrod‡; thereby weakening his own army, and giving proportionate strength to that of the enemy. Thus fell the British chieftain, and his fall was a main cause of accelerating the overthrow of the ancient Britons, or Cymry, as an independent nation. The power of the Saxons appears from this period gradually to have increased, until the primitive inhabitants were, at length, deprived of their

* Drayton, in his *Polyolbion*. Among the few writers who have declared their scepticism on this point, is Carte in his History of England, who places Camlan at Kirby Lonsdale, in Westmoreland. The current of authorities, however, is in favour of the situation here adopted; and the battle is supposed to have been fought near Camelford, on the banks of the Camel or Alan, anciently, accordingly to Camden, called Camblan, an opinion, which Leland appears previously to have espoused.

† See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. ii. p. 385.

‡ Id. ib. p. 49.

ancient dominion, which was ultimately contracted within the mountain barriers of Wales.

The interment of Arthur at Glastonbury, to which place his body is said to have been conveyed immediately from the fatal field of Camlan, and the subsequent discovery of his tomb in the reign of Henry II. are not perhaps such events as should be admitted, in an unqualified manner, into a narrative which aims at retaining only what has some pretension to historical truth. The confidence, however, with which the latter circumstance is detailed by Giraldus, a writer certainly of some credit, and who describes himself as speaking from ocular demonstration, deserves that it should not be entirely disregarded. According to this account, then, Henry II., having heard, whilst in Wales*, of an ancient tradition concerning Arthur's burial between two stone pillars at Glastonbury, caused search to be made on the spot, when a flat stone was discovered about seven feet beneath the surface, having attached to its lower side a leaden cross with the following inscription:—

"HIC JACET SEPULTUS INCLYTUS REX
ARTHURIUS IN INSULA AVALONIA."

The characters, according to the *fac-simile* given of them by Camden, are of a rude and Gothic form, and are not, from their peculiar construction, to be assigned, without much difficulty, to the age in which Arthur lived. However, the inscription is regarded by Leland † as well as Gi-

* It was while on a visit to Kilgaran Castle, in Pembrokeshire, that Henry is said to have received this intelligence.

† Leland, in speaking of the cross, which he appears to have handled with a superstitious rapture, says of it—"quam ego curiosissimis contemplatus cum oculis et solicitis contrectavi articulis, motus et antiquitate rei et dignitate."—It may here be proper to observe, that the authority of Leland,

raldus, both of whom saw it, as a genuine memorial of the hero, whose name it bears.

Besides the inscription, and about nine feet lower, the presumed remains of Arthur were also discovered, inclosed in the trunk of an oak tree. They presented bones of an extraordinary magnitude, indicating the almost gigantic stature of the individual to whom they had belonged*; and on the skull were the still visible vestiges of ten wounds, one of them from its greater size and more gaping appearance, supposed to be that which had caused his death. Near this rude coffin was another of a similar description, which was conjectured, from some yellow female hair that was found in it, to contain the remains of one of Arthur's wives.

Such is, briefly, the narrative, which Giraldus supplies of this remarkable incident, and to which, it is scarcely necessary to add, he seems to have given implicit credit. That he actually saw the inscription, and the reputed bones of Arthur is unquestionable; and whatever delusion may belong to the circumstance is not to be ascribed originally to Giraldus. He merely reports what he saw; and what he reports he seems conscientiously to have regarded as free from any deception. He was, perhaps, too much of a patriot to scrutinize, with any degree of scepticism, an occurrence so gratifying to his national prepossessions. The last earthly relics of his renowned countryman were, apparently, before him, and, dazzled by the spectacle, he suffered the improbabilities of the case to be overbalanced by

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however occasionally worthy of credit, is in general to be received with much caution. The *Assertio Arturii* is, in fact, a mixture of some truth with almost all that is fabulous in the life of the British champion.

* Giraldus says, that the shin-bone, placed by the leg of a very tall man, rose the breadth of three fingers above his knee.

the interesting associations, which forced themselves on his mind. He did not reflect, that six centuries had fully closed their destructive career since the remains of Arthur had been consigned to their silent abode; and the great probability that in so long a period some earlier discovery must have been made, if Glastonbury had been traditionally known to be the place of the chieftain's interment, had, we may conclude, no share of his consideration. Nor did he perhaps call to mind, that none of the bards of Arthur's time that survived his fall, and some of whom were on terms of intimacy with him, have any historical notice of his interment; whilst, on the contrary, Taliesin distinctly alludes to it as "a mystery of the world," which seems to indicate, at least, the uncertainty in which the circumstance was involved in that age. Nor is the solution of this "mystery" a matter at present of any moment, even if it were possible; but all vestiges of the tomb and its sacred deposit have long ago vanished*. We must, therefore, be content to trace them, as we can, in the account of Giraldus, which, however exposed to suspicion, deserves, from the currency it has obtained in the world, that it should not be rejected as altogether unworthy of notice.

In addition to the main incidents in the life of Arthur

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* These disputed remains were removed, by the order of Henry, to the great church of Glastonbury, and were there enshrined in a splendid marble tomb, which was afterwards, in the reign of Edward I., placed before the high altar. Here it remained until the furious and undiscriminating zeal of Henry VIII. overthrew the religious houses and all that they contained. Mr. Whitaker, author of the History of Manchester, was at Glastonbury, and saw, as he tells us, the two pillars, which originally stood near the grave of Arthur, and which were then appropriated to some common use. But, how could he have been satisfied as to their identity; or, if he was, what did it prove?

already recorded, the Triads and ancient Welsh poems have several miscellaneous notices respecting him, to which it may be proper to advert. We learn from these, that his three chief places of residence were in Wales, Cornwall, and the North of England; between which, in all probability, his time was divided, as the exigency of his affairs required his presence at one place or the other. His court, according to the same authority, was the grand resort of the valour and beauty of his dominions; for the Triads have preserved the names of several warriors and distinguished females, that usually formed a part of it. And it may be right here to remark, that neither in these national documents, nor in any other of an authentic character, is their the slightest allusion to the celebrated order of the Round Table, which, indeed, has long been rejected as a mere creature of romance. That Arthur was attached to the fair sex may be inferred from the testimony of the same ancient records; for the names of four of his wives have descended to us, as well as those of three other females that lived with him in a less honourable character*. He had a sister, who has been before incidentally noticed; and the names of three of his sons, Llechau, Noe, and Morgant, are to be collected from different sources; but of Llechau alone are there any certain memorials. He is recorded in the Triads as having devoted himself to scientific pursuits, and, more particularly, to those of Natural History, in which he is said to have eminently excelled†. But he does not appear, on this account, to have been less attentive to his duties as a warrior and a patriot; for he fell,

* The Triads, in which the foregoing particulars are to be found, are translated in the third volume of the *Cambro-Briton*, p. 387 to 394.

† See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. ii. p. 242.

fighting against the enemies of his country, in the battle of Llongborth already adverted to, in which his father commanded.

The fame of Arthur must continue chiefly to rest, as it hitherto has, upon his military celebrity; but it appears from the Triads, that he also aspired to a more tranquil sort of renown. For he is numbered among the "*irregular* bards of the isle of Britain," in consequence of the incompatibility of the bardic profession, as anciently existing in this island, with the general tenour of Arthur's occupations*. This, together with the patronage he afforded to his bardic contemporaries, and especially to Merddin and Llywarch Hên, sufficiently indicates his partiality to poetical pursuits, however he may have wanted the necessary leisure or talent to cultivate them to advantage. One triplet only, ascribed to him, has survived the wreck of time; and, from the simplicity of its structure, it seems to have the characteristics of a genuine composition. It merely designates, without any effort at poetical ornament, his three "chief battle-horsemen," a theme, it must be allowed, by no means unlikely to have employed the strains of a warrior†.

Such was the renowned British hero, divested of the splendid apparel in which the votaries of romance have been wont to exhibit him. That he was a brave and skilful commander is evident from the concurrence of the most respectable testimony; and, no doubt, his exploits and example contributed materially to the success with which his countrymen often opposed the assaults of the Saxons. But, on the other hand, it must be admitted, that the civil

* Id. ib. p. 437.

† See vol. i. of the same work, p. 248, for the Triad containing this triplet or *englyn*.

dissensions amongst the Britons themselves, in which he was occasionally engaged, may have had the effect of neutralizing, in some degree, the advantages he had gained over the common enemy; yet, this may justly be regarded as the fault less of the man than of the age. It was an era, in which the dark and unsocial qualities of our nature appear to have been particularly predominant, and when the reputation of a hero was to be sought, not in the exercise of the peaceful virtues, but in rushing on, as the tempest urged, from slaughter to slaughter, reckless of the load of death and ruin that might fill his sanguinary career*. It is enough, that, under such circumstances, the fame of Arthur has descended to us, not only unsullied by the imputation of any gross excesses, but as that of a distinguished and gallant assertor of the liberties of his country against the growing torrent, by which they were eventually overwhelmed.

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* This characteristic of those turbulent times may account for the epithet of "blood-stained warrior," which is given Arthur in the Triads, where he is also, however, more than once celebrated for his bravery.

ANEURIN.

BEFORE we enter upon the memoir of Aneurin, one of the most eminent of the ancient Welsh bards, it is necessary that we should take a cursory view of the nation to which he belonged. It might otherwise appear extraordinary, that one, whose birth and lineage are to be traced to the northern parts of Britain, should be numbered among those, who, by their genius or conduct, have shed a lustre upon the annals of Wales.

According to the earliest Welsh records, whether in poetry or prose, which we have of this island, its first or aboriginal inhabitants were the Cymry, who are to be identified with the Cimbri and Cimmerii of the Roman and Greek historians*. They are described as having emigrated from Asia at a very remote period; but the precise date of the event is now necessarily involved in an impenetrable obscurity. This primitive colonization was followed by other settlements made at various times, previous to the Roman invasion; and among which were those of the Loegrians, the Brython, the Coranians, and Belgæ, the last of them, in all probability, about three centuries before

* For the Triads, which record the first peopling of this island by the Cymry, see the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 45-7, and vol. ii. p. 97. The course taken by the Cymry in their progress to Europe, as marked out in these Triads, may be compared with similar accounts given of the advances of the Cimmerii and Cimbri by Herodotus, Strabo, Dionysius, Pliny, and other writers. A collection of the various statements, by which the authenticity of the Welsh records might be established, would far exceed the bounds of a note. Some judicious remarks on the subject may be seen in the *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 13, &c.

the rest of his countrymen, to the Saxons in the disastrous conflict of Cattraeth, which forms the subject of his principal poem. The Britons, on this occasion, were commanded by Urien Rheged, a celebrated warrior of that day, and must have been in considerable force, since Aneurin alludes to three hundred and sixty-three as wearing the golden *torques*, an emblem, no doubt, of their preeminent rank or high military distinction*. They were, probably, so many independent chieftains, who, according to the custom of the times, as we learn from the Triads, were attended to the field by their particular retinues†. This battle was fought on the coast of Northumberland‡ about the year 540, and proved fatal to the Britons, owing, it appears, to their inebriated condition when they took the field; and in consequence of which three chieftains only,

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* The old bards make frequent allusion to this custom of wearing the golden wreath; and we learn from Dio Cassius, that such an ornament was worn by Boadicea. The practice must have been preserved amongst the Cymry for some ages, as Llywelyn, a Welsh chieftain of the twelfth century, owed to it, no doubt, the epithet of *Aurdorchog*, (Torquatus,) by which he is known. One of these ancient insignia was found in 1692 at Harlech in Merionethshire; and two others have been discovered of late years, one at Dolau Cothi in Carmarthenshire, and the other near Caerwys in the county of Flint. Nor was this custom confined to the ancient Britons; for Propertius tells us, that Britomartus, a chieftain of the Gauls, was thus distinguished. And it appears from a passage in Daniel (ch. v. v. 7 and 29), that a chain of gold was, in his time, a mark of high rank in Babylon.

† See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. ii. p. 337, for a Triad, enumerating three of these retinues, and one of which fought in the battle of Cattraeth. Aneurin reckons the number of combatants on this occasion at more than five hundred thousand: and, when we consider that the whole north was, at this period, confederated against the Saxons, this number, however incredible, may not be greatly exaggerated. We all know what immense armies Boadicea had raised against the Romans four centuries earlier.

‡ The name of *Cattraeth*, (apparently derived from *cad* and *traeth*, the Battle-Strand,) and the numerous allusions in the Gododin, seem to leave no doubt that the conflict took place on the sea-coast.

out of the number above alluded to, escaped the general slaughter. History does not inform us who the Saxon commander was upon this occasion; but there are reasons for supposing, that it was the celebrated Ida, who is known to have had several contests with the Britons in that part of the kingdom.

Although Aneurin had the good fortune to survive the dreadful carnage of Cattraeth, he was not entirely exempted from the evils incident to a battle; for we find from his own authority, that he was taken prisoner by the enemy and treated, during his captivity, with extreme rigour. Loaded with chains, he was thrown into a gloomy dungeon, where he appears to have languished, for some time, in considerable torture*; and he would, in all probability, have sunk under his sufferings, if fortune had not sent to his aid a friend and fellow warrior. This was Cenau, a son of the venerable bard Llywarch Hên, who rescued Aneurin from his imprisonment, and has received, in the grateful strains of the poet, the meed of his generous valour. For the latter thus adverts to this interesting event:—

> From the power of the sword, (noble was the succour),
> From the cruel prison-house of earth he released me,
> From the place of death, from the cheerless region,
> He, Cenau, son of Llywarch, magnanimous and brave.

Whilst the poet thus records the generosity of his friend,

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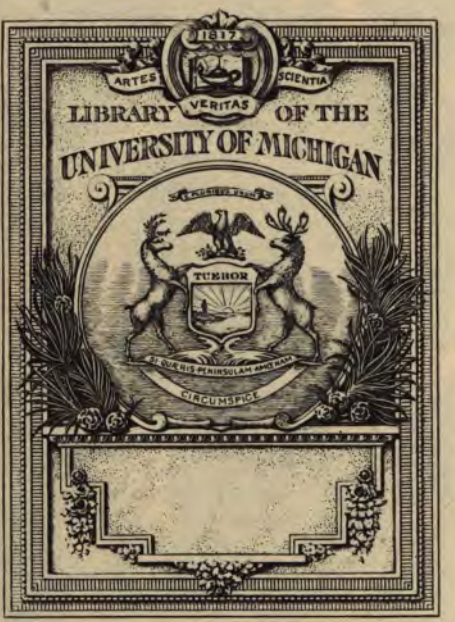
* The following is the passage, in which the poet briefly alludes to his treatment on this occasion:—

> Pierced were the soles of my feet,
> Lacerated was my knee,
> In the house of earth,
> With a chain of iron around my knees.

This can only have reference to a close and cruel incarceration.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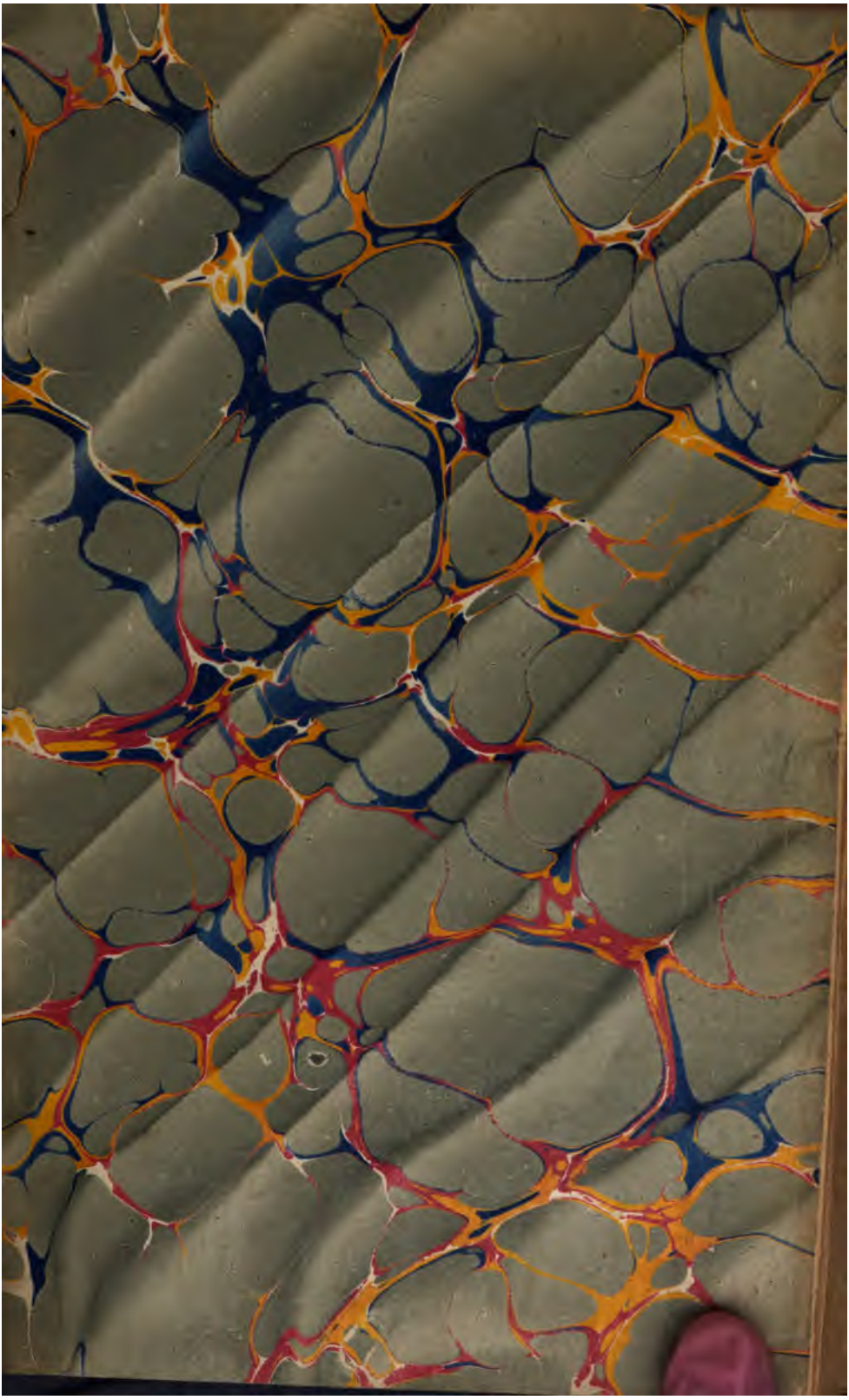

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E. Margaret Humphreys.
March 1944.

the Triads have consigned to infamy for this act of atrocity*.

Whatever may have been the devotion which Aneurin paid to his muse, no more than two productions, under his name, have descended to us; and one only of these bears internal evidence of its genuineness. This is the Gododin, already noticed in the progress of the foregoing memoir; and even this is obviously in a mutilated and imperfect state. But it is still the longest and most important of all the ancient Welsh poems; and no account of Aneurin can be complete, that does not embrace an inquiry into its more remarkable characteristics.

It may first be proper, however, to take a general view of the prominent traits of Welsh poetry, which distinguish it, in so essential a manner, from that of all other countries, ancient or modern. There is nothing, indeed, in the whole history of Welsh literature more singular than this peculiarity of its mountain muse, and which has, no doubt, deterred many from paying her the same homage, that has been vouchsafed to her sisters in other parts of the globe. The eccentricity of her attire has had, at first sight, it would appear, a sort of repulsive effect, which few have afterwards endeavoured to overcome.

There can be no discredit in admitting that the poetry of Wales can boast of nothing to compete with the more celebrated productions of other countries. In vain should we look in it for the uniform sublimity which ennobles the strains of Homer,—for the unbending majesty, and elegant propriety, of the Virgilian sentiments,—or for the regular and well-sustained flight of Pope's philosophic muse. The

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* *Cambro-Briton*, vol. ii. p. 10.

true characteristics of Welsh poetry are of a nature essentially different; not that it is not often pregnant with glowing thought, with dignified sentiments, with tender feeling, and with fine moral sense; but it rarely, if ever, happens, that the Welsh poet holds "the even tenour of his way" in one uninterrupted strain, whether of sublimity or of pathos. It is the irregular flash, the coruscation, of genius, rather than its full and steady blaze, that imparts a splendour to the *awen** of Wales; and hence it is, that the country is far more likely to supply rivals to Pindar or Gray than to Milton or Lucretius. And the lyric excellence of some of its poetry, especially the more ancient†, forms a practical illustration of this hypothesis.

But, because the Welsh bards may have produced nothing to equal the height of "Greek or Roman fame," we are not rashly to conclude that their strains possess no features, that can interest or delight. What has been said of the inferior poets of Greece may, in a more general sense, be justly applied to them:—

> Non si priores Mæonius tenet
> Sedes Homerus, Pindaricæ latent
> Ceæque, &c.

For, although they have not mounted to the very pinnacle of poetical renown, it is not to be concluded that they lie

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* *Awen* is the word employed, in Welsh, to denote poetical genius: it means literally a flow of mind, or inspiration. The Poetical Triads contain a fine definition of genius, which it would be difficult to surpass. It is this:—"an eye that can see nature, a heart that can feel nature, and a resolution that dares follow nature." Johnson's laboured definition seems much inferior.

† Among these the Odes of Gwalchmai, a poet of the twelfth century, stand pre-eminent; and of which the muse of Gray has furnished the English reader with some spirited imitations.

grovelling at the base of the column. Nor, because they refuse allegiance to the power generally acknowledged within the territory of the muses, are they to be regarded as mere literary outlaws subject to no government, and bound by no legal restraint. We ought rather to admire the spirit, with which they have emancipated themselves from the sovereignty of Parnassus, and maintained, through so many centuries, the integrity of their republican independence.

Among the general causes, to which the peculiar attributes of Welsh poetry are to be traced, may be noticed, in the first place, the singular institution of Bardism, formerly existing among the Cymry, and which appears to have grown out of the still more ancient system ascribed to the Druids. The Bards, indeed, composed, originally, one of the orders of the Druidical institution; and when, in process of time, that political fabric was deprived of its primitive importance, they seem to have formed themselves into a distinct association. Some memorials of the regulations, to which this new institution was subject, as well as of their singular tenets, still survive; but they are, for the most part, so interpolated with the metaphysical subtleties of later times, that it is scarcely possible to distinguish the genuine from the spurious*. Enough, however, remains to shew, that poetry formed an especial object of the care and cultivation of the Bards, whose name has, accordingly, become synonymous with the sons of song. Hence the art was submitted to a strict discipline and a peculiar system of rules; and it cannot be deemed surprising, if the earlier effusions of the Welsh poets were also impregnated with

* For some of these Triads, see the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. ii. pp. 100, 290, and 239.

the mystical doctrines of Bardism, as, indeed, may be proved to have been the case from some compositions still extant*. The Bards, thus regarding poetry as a necessary part of their institution, were naturally desirous of rendering it an appropriate medium of the doctrinal or historical lore, which they thus treasured. To this it must be, in a great measure, ascribed, that Welsh poetry combines a richer store of metres than was, perhaps, ever known to that of any other nation, and which have been progressively increased, by the refinements of subsequent times, to the number of twenty-four. These are all dependent on a certain principle of alliteration, called *cynghanedd*†, which, being peculiar to Welsh prosody, invests the strains, over which it presides, with a certain original air, not easily to be explained to any ignorant of the Welsh tongue. But the influence of the Bardic institution on the ancient poetry of Wales was not confined to its metrical embellishment. It was also productive of a more essential and a more honourable distinction in the love of truth, which it inculcated in its votaries. For "the truth against the world" was not only a favourite axiom of the Bards, but was also adopted as the motto of the order, and the vital principle of its proceedings‡; and, by a natural transition, it became a predominant feature of their poetical productions. For

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* This is peculiarly observable in some of the poems of Taliesin.

† The alliteration, implied by this word, must not be confounded with what is commonly understood by the English term. The Welsh word may be periphrastically rendered "an alliteral symphony of certain words governed by metrical rules, and tending to the general harmony of the poem."

‡ Thus, according to the Institutional Triads of Bardism, "to make truth manifest, and to diffuse the knowledge of it," is numbered among the attributes of the Bards; and the Poetical Triads, in a similar spirit, reckon "pure truth" as one of the three purities of poetry.

this reason it is, that, in matters of history, the poets have always been consulted as the faithful chroniclers of their times, while, by a singular contrast, the oldest prose compositions are regarded, for the most part, as the mere vehicles of romance and of fiction. This inversion of the ordinary character of the respective species of writing is, perhaps, peculiar to Wales.

Another and a material source of the native originality of the Cambrian muse is to be found in the particular characteristics of the Welsh language. Its oriental extraction, the copious significance of its simple terms, with the facilities resulting from the combination of these, added to the grammatical structure of the language, have conspired to enhance this distinction by means of the various and novel sources of rhythmical harmony, which they have created. From this combination of accidents it has resulted, that the poetry of Wales, and more particularly that of ancient times, conveys to the ear of a person, uninformed of its peculiar properties, something unintelligible and obscure. And any attempt to explain it through the medium of a literal translation must necessarily prove unsatisfactory, as wanting those aids which give to the original the greatest portion of its beauty and energy. Nor is it possible, even in a poetical version, to preserve all the sententious brevity, with the sudden transitions and occasional boldness of figurative expression, peculiar to the muse of the Cymry.

A third general cause of the literary phenomenon under discussion, and in some degree connected with the one last noticed, is the alliance that has ever existed between the songs of the bard and the strains of the musician. This has been the natural consequence of the harmonious properties, already adverted to as inherent in the Welsh tongue. Hence arose the national custom of singing with the harp,

known in Wales from time immemorial, and not yet extinct. The prevalence of this practice has, no doubt, contributed greatly to the formation of that rigid code of laws, by which Welsh poetry is governed, and may have occasioned certain metrical symphonies to be studied at the expense of those loftier aspirations, that confer dignity and immortality on the effusions of the muse. A desire to instruct the mind, or to delight the fancy, seems generally to have had less influence on the poet than an anxiety to pour his fascinations upon the ear.

Such is the concurrence of causes, that seems to have rendered the poetry of Wales less the poetry of thought than of expression. For, although the bard may appear occasionally to emancipate himself, with all the instinctiveness of genius, from the shackles which impede his flight, there are still certain bounds which he finds himself unable to pass. The light of inspiration may illumine for a while, but it is speedily contracted within the magical circle by which his muse is beset. All this communicates to Welsh poetry, it cannot be denied, a sort of laboured and artificial character, which seems inconsistent with those higher and more alluring qualities that ought to belong to it. Yet it is not without its redeeming virtues. For, independent of its metrical beauties so unrivalled in their variety, it possesses that vigorous terseness of thought and expression, which was anciently common to the poetry of the East. It displays also much splendid imagery, and, if it may want the regular charms of design and execution, that distinguish the more eminent productions of the muse, it is not without those vivid bursts, that indicate the gifted minds of its votaries. But, above all, it lays claim to a high historical character, which communicates a peculiar value to the more ancient remains, and would alone justify the estimation, in

which they have ever been held by the admirers of Welsh literature.

Among these intellectual relics, the Gododin of Aneurin has ever held the first rank, and yet not so much for its poetical merit, as for its historical details, the more valuable because the internal proofs of its genuineness are of so decisive a character. It does not indeed, like the classical effusions of Greece and Rome, or even like the reputed productions of Ossian, contain a well-contrived fable, embellished with all the artful colourings of the muse. It has no regular design, no definite object; and, least of all, does it aim at flattering the national prepossessions of those, to whom it may be supposed to have been addressed. On the contrary, the subject, chosen by the poet, is, in the highest degree, reproachful to the character of his countrymen: he sings of a disastrous defeat, which they had sustained, and that too owing to their inordinate indulgence in a low and degrading propensity. This is surely the very last theme, that would have suggested itself for the purposes of imposture: it was scarcely calculated to excite attention, much less admiration. In a word, it is just such a subject as an artless writer, having no desire but to report what he saw, may be presumed to have adopted; and the genuineness of the Gododin, as a work of the sixth century, might be left with security to rest on this ground alone.

But this is not all: the style of the poem, the language in which it is written, and the incidents which it records, are so many positive testimonies to its genuine character. It was the offspring of an age, be it remembered, which, in comparison with those that gave birth to the Iliad and Æneid, cannot but be deemed barbarous; and it must not, therefore, be placed by the side of the renowned master-

pieces of the Mæonian and Mantuan bards. Whatever may have been the original form of the Gododin, it presents now little more than a collection of elegiac and encomiastic strains on the heroes, who fell in a certain battle, in which the poet was also engaged. The style is, like the subject, devious and irregular, and may be likened to an assemblage of mountain oaks in their native rudeness and disorder, rather than to the stately and well ordered forest that owes its grandeur to the care and cultivation of man. Hence the poem is marked more by the bursts of feeling and energy of expression, which it occasionally displays, than by any regular luxuriance or dignity of style. It may rather be considered, in the words of an ingenious writer*, as so many "poetic *memoranda* of a disastrous conflict, penned by a friend who had witnessed its events in all the confusion in which they had occurred, than a well-conceived and artfully arranged series of individual conflicts, like the poem of Homer, which, though genuine as to the author, yet contains incidents which the poet's invention has arranged as it pleased." But the Gododin is genuine, not only as to its author, but also as to its subject: it is in short a poetical record of a train of calamities, which the bard himself witnessed, and under the influence of which he may almost be said to have written. Hence that undisguised simplicity, that vivid freshness of style, which communicates to the poem its most prominent and most attractive characteristics.

The language is evidently that of a remote age, and, although intelligible in its general construction to the Welsh,

* Mr. Turner in his "Vindication of the ancient Welsh Bards," p. 212. This work is, unquestionably, the ablest defence ever offered of the genuineness of the poetical remains of Wales, and entitles the author to the gratitude of the nation, in whose cause he has volunteered his talents.

scholar of the present day, contains many words no longer in ordinary use. It abounds too in those dialectical distinctions, that were peculiar to the Cymry of North Britain, and is marked, moreover, by the adoption of many compound terms, particularly in use among the poets of the sixth century, but of which subsequent ages have furnished comparatively but few examples.

The calamitous incidents, recorded in the Gododin, are also strong proofs of its genuineness; for, independent of their general consistency with the character of that turbulent age, many of them are corroborated by the testimony of the Triads and of contemporary bards. It is worthy of remark too, with reference to this point, that they are such events as were very likely to call forth the particular emotions evinced by the writer, when they had taken place, as it were, under his eye. Accordingly, he details what he had seen, not merely as a poet but as a man, as it was presented to his feelings not to his imagination. Above all, he dwells with a sort of restless anxiety upon the disgraceful cause of these complicated disasters,—the inebriety of his countrymen,—and speaks of it in such a manner, as one who had witnessed its effects, and had suffered from them, and such a one only, was likely to do. It is the language of nature, expressing, without embellishment and without disguise, the mental workings of an individual, deeply affected by the calamity and disgrace in which he had participated.

Such are the leading features of the Gododin, that seem to render its reputation unquestionable as a genuine production of the period to which it is ascribed. From what has been already said it will be perceived, that it has no pretension to the character of an epic poem. It is more properly heroic than epic, and is at last but a fragment of the original composition, if it be true, as traditionally re-

lated, that the number of its stanzas corresponded at first with the number of chieftains engaged in the battle, who have already been incidentally mentioned as amounting to three hundred and sixty-three. The poem, as we now have it, contains about nine hundred lines, and embraces an intermixture of heroic and lyric verse, but of which the former predominates. As before remarked, there is no art or method in the conduct of the poem; it even wants, what most probably it never possessed when perfect, a preparatory exordium or invocation. The poet plunges at once into his subject. Like a resolute warrior, he throws himself, without premeditation, into the midst of the battle, and sets out "by describing, not his plan or purpose, but one of his heroes*." From this he passes to other similar portraits, devoting, as he proceeds, to his fellow-warriors the meed of eulogy or lamentation. His transitions are accordingly abrupt and frequent, and his expressions often extremely concise, and sometimes even obscure. Yet, however deficient the poem may be in the embellishments of art, or in the delicacies of contrivance, enough remains to vindicate the genius of the bard, and the current celebrity of his production.

The commencement of the Gododin, already alluded to, conveying an animated picture of a young warrior, is in the lyric measure. The following version will give the English reader some notion of it, although it is impossible, even if it were desirable, to transfer to the translation the metrical distinctions of the original.

Lo, the youth, in mind a man,
Daring in the battle's van!
See the splendid warrior's speed
On his fleet and thick-maned steed,

* This is also a quotation from the work mentioned in the last note.

As his buckler, beaming wide,
Decks the courser's slender side,
With his steel of spotless mould,
Ermined vest and spurs of gold.
Think not, youth, that e'er from me
Hate or spleen shall flow to thee:
Nobler meed thy virtues claim,
Eulogy and tuneful fame.
Ah! much sooner comes thy bier
Than thy nuptial feast, I fear;
Ere thou mak'st the foeman bleed,
Ravens on thy corse shall feed.
Owain, lov'd companion, friend,
To birds a prey—is this thy end?
Tell me, steed, on what sad plain
Thy ill-fated lord was slain?

The next quotation supplies an example of the full heroic verse, in which the poem is chiefly written, though subject to the disadvantage of being almost a literal prosaic version. The passage contains one of the bard's allusions, already noticed, to the intemperance of his countrymen, as the main source of the deplorable catastrophe he had undertaken to celebrate.

At Cattraeth's scene of blood, when nois'd by fame,
Humanity will long bewail the loss;—
A powerless throne, a land all desolate,
Godebog's progeny, a faithful band,
On biers are borne to glut the yawning grave;
Wretched their end, yet true the destiny,
As sworn to Tudvolch and to Cyvolch proud,—
That, though by blaze of torch they quaff'd bright mead,
Though sweet its taste, its curse would long be felt.

Another stanza, written in the same metre, will perhaps be sufficient to give the reader an insight into the Gododin. It commemorates a chieftain named Cynon, and is written with much natural feeling.

None made the social hall so free from care
As gentle Cynon, Clinion's sovereign lord;
For highest rank he never proudly strove,
And whom he once had known he ne'er would slight.
Yet was his spear keen-pointed, and well knew
To pierce, with truest aim, th' embattled line.
Swift flew his steed to meet the hostile storm,
And death sat on his lance, as, with the dawn,
He rush'd to war in glory's brilliant day.

There is something in this passage calculated to awaken our classical recollections. It affords, in particular, a parallel to some parts of the Iliad, in which the same interesting allusion to the private qualities of a fallen chief accompanies the commemoration of his heroic virtues; a feature, that may likewise be traced in the strains of the Bard of Cona. But the poem of Aneurin, it is hardly necessary to repeat, has nothing in common with the general characteristics either of the Homeric muse, or of the reputed effusions of Ossian. Such accidental resemblances, as that here noticed, owe their birth to the natural affinities of genius, when acting from the impulse of feeling unembarrassed by any artificial restraints.

The other poem, attributed to Aneurin, is entitled "Stanzas on the Months*," and is dedicated, as may be inferred from the name, to a delineation of the more prominent features of the respective seasons. These are drawn by touches as it were, and in a forcible and picturesque manner. But the poem obviously wants those innate evidences of genuineness, which belong to the Gododin. The popular voice, however, has for centuries ascribed both productions to the same author, and it is now too late to dispute the decree. For this reason, a version of one of

* The title, in the original, is *Englynion y Miseedd*, generally, but erroneously, rendered "*Odes* of the Months."

these stanzas shall close the specimens of Aneurin's muse. It is that in which the month of March is described. The translation is literal, without an attempt to give it even the appearance of metre.

In the month of March the vivacity of birds is great,
And bitterly blows the cold blast o'er the furrows;
Yet fair weather shall outlive the foul,
As anger is more lasting than grief.
Every living thing is eager to bring forth,
Every fowl acknowledges its mate:
All things shall spring up from the ground,
Save the dead alone,—for strong is his prison.

The other stanzas are of a similar character, and close, like this, with a moral sentiment; a mode of writing in particular favour with the Welsh poets, and owing its origin to the Bardic institution, whose instructions were often conveyed in poetical triplets, the first two lines having generally some image, illustrative of the aphorism in the last.

With this we must bring to a conclusion our account of the life and poems of Aneurin, whose fame will be cherished in Wales as long as the literature of the country continues to be an object of interest. And the estimation, in which he was formerly held, is sufficiently proved by the epithets that have been bestowed on him. Aneurin of the Flowing Muse, and Monarch of the Bards*, are the appellations, by which he is known in our old writings; and, as the author of the most important relic of ancient Welsh poetry, he can scarcely be deemed, even now, unworthy of such a distinction.

* The term *bard* must here be taken in its popular acceptation, and not as having any reference to the ancient institution, of which mention has been made in this memoir. For, Aneurin's warlike occupation was directly at variance with the fundamental principles of the Bardic system, which inculcated amongst its members the love of peace as one of their first duties. Aneurin, then, could have been no *bard* in this sense of the word.

TALIESIN.

Of all the ancient poets of Wales Taliesin has decidedly acquired the pre-eminence in popular repute. Both at home and abroad this distinction has been conceded to him: the partial veneration of his countrymen has found an echo in the gratuitous respect of other nations. That his memory should be peculiarly endeared to the natives of Wales cannot be deemed surprising; for he was, above all his bardic cotemporaries, wholly and emphatically one of themselves. Born and educated amongst their mountains, he consumed there the taper of life, dedicating to his beloved *awen* his youth, his manhood, and his declining years. To Taliesin then belongs pre-eminently the appellation of a Welsh bard; and with his name have been associated those national predilections, which embalm for posterity the renown of illustrious men.

There is some uncertainty as to the precise period of Taliesin's birth; but, according to the concurrent suffrages of our early records and the tradition of the country, his life occupied a space of about fifty years during the sixth century*. He thus forms a part of that constellation of poetical genius, which illumines the first epoch of Welsh literature. The account, that we have of the dawn of our poet's existence, is of a somewhat romantic character; for the first incident recorded of him, is that he was discovered, soon after his birth, in a fishing weat, on the coast of Cardigan, belonging to Gwyddno, a petty prince of that part of the country. Here, it is related of him, exposed, like

* According to the received accounts this was from 520 to 570.

the infant Moses, in a basket or coracle, he was found by some fishermen, who carried him to Gwyddno, whose only son, Elfin, appears, from that moment, to have taken the little foundling under his own immediate protection. Whatever truth may belong to this relation, though in itself not absolutely incredible, we may at least infer from it, that Taliesin was a native of that part of the country, to which the tradition has been appropriated. Perhaps, having become early an orphan, he was charitably received under the care of Elfin; and the narrative of his exposure in the wear may have been adopted to veil with a romantic interest the uncertainty of his parentage*.

Gwyddno, the father of Elfin, possessed, as already noticed, a small principality or lordship on the coast of South Wales, which was known by the name of *Cantrev y Gwaelod*, the Lowland Hundred. This territory, according to the Historical Triads, was destroyed by an inundation in the time of Ambrosius, probably about the close of the fifth century†; and the calamity is supposed to have reduced Gwyddno and his son to the necessity of supporting themselves by the produce of the wear above alluded to. It is after the period of this event, whether the account given of Taliesin's discovery be true or fabulous, that we must apparently date his first introduction to Elfin. This connec-

* The incident here related rests chiefly on the authority of the "Life of Taliesin" (*Hanes Taliesin*), of which a copy may be seen in the Archaiology of Wales. It is, for the most part, a mere fabulous compilation. But there seems no reason for rejecting it altogether. The foundation may be worthy of credit, whatever suspicion may attach itself to the superstructure.

† For a translation of the Triad, recording this disaster, see the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 361. There is also in the *Arch. of Wales*, vol. i. p. 165, a poem on the event, ascribed to Gwyddno himself. The territory, thus overwhelmed, is said to have comprised sixteen large fortified towns. Vestiges of the calamity are still to be traced in the neighbourhood.

tion appears to have been very propitious to the young bard, who, in a poem, entitled " The Consolation of Elfin"*, alludes, in a pretended strain of prophecy, to the mutual advantages that had been the result of the intimacy. The poem is written in the assumed character of an exposed orphan, and has been ascribed to an early period after the miraculous preservation of the infant bard. The particular object of the poem appears to have been to console Elfin for an accidental failure in his fishery, by opposing to it the benefits that would accrue to him from the future celebrity of his foundling. The composition, if genuine, as it has ever been considered, proves at once the precocity of the young poet's talents, and the cultivation they must have received under the auspices of his patron, to whose amiable qualities he alludes in terms of delicate gratitude. There is also a strain of moral and religious feeling throughout the effusion, which indicates that the author's proficiency was not confined to his poetical acquirements.

During the time of Taliesin's residence with Elfin, the latter was taken prisoner in the civil commotions, common at that period, by his uncle Maelgwn, prince of North Wales, and confined in the castle of Deganwy. Upon this occasion we find the gratitude of the young bard again evinced, in a poem addressed to Maelgwn on behalf of his friend and protector†, and which appears, from another effusion‡, to have had the desired effect, in the release of Elfin from his captivity. In this poem Taliesin renews the

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* See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 30, for a translation of this poem.

† This effusion is entitled The Mead Song, *(Canu y Medd)*. The original is to be found in the *Arch. of Wales*, vol. i. p. 22.

‡ The Song on the Sons of Llyr, *(Cerdd am Veib Llyr)*, *Arch. of Wales*, vol. i. p. 67. There is also an allusion to the same event in p 34 of the same volume.

acknowledgment of his obligation to his patron, and alludes, in express terms, to some presents he had received from him in addition to the enjoyment of his general friendship and hospitality*. It is not improbable, that this tribute of the poet's muse was the means of introducing him to Maelgwn, with whom he was afterwards in particular favour.

When Taliesin had ceased, as we may presume, to be under the immediate patronage of Elfin, he became a pupil of Cadog, at his college in Glamorganshire, where he had an opportunity of forming the acquaintance with Aneurin, alluded to in the memoir of that bard. About this time too, it is likely, he also contracted that intimacy with Urien Rheged, a Cumbrian chief, which appears to have subsisted during the remainder of their joint lives. Urien was one of those warriors, whom the successes of the Picts and Saxons in the northern parts of the island had driven fugitives into Wales; and, even in his exile, he seems to have evinced the same liberal patronage of the bards, for which he was distinguished in his native land. Taliesin, among others, experienced his countenance and friendship, and has addressed several poems to him, in which he celebrates the warlike fame of his new patron, and enumerates the battles he had fought. In one of these effusions he alludes to his own residence near the lake of Ceirionydd, in Carnarvonshire†, whither he may have gone by the invitation of Maelgwn, with whom, as we have just seen, he had previously had an opportunity of ingratiating himself.

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* The expression in the poem is—

"Elfin, that gave me wine, ale, and mead,
And the fine princely steeds of gay appearance."

† The poet's words on the occasion, here alluded to, are—

"And I also Taliesin,
From the banks of the lake Ceirionydd."

The remaining notices of Taliesin are very scanty; and it cannot be ascertained with any precision where his latter days were spent. His time, after quitting Cadog's college, was probably divided between his friends, Urien and Maelgwn, and the greatest portion of it, perhaps, with the former, whose residence in South Wales must have enabled him to keep up his acquaintance with Aneurin. It is also likely, that, about the same period, he became known to the celebrated Merddin, who had likewise been compelled by the troubles of the north to seek a refuge in Wales*. Among the poems attributed to Taliesin, is a "Dialogue" between him and this poet, which, whether genuine or not as to the reputed author, may safely be taken as a proof of that intimacy between the two bards, which a congeniality of feeling and talent must have rendered so natural.

That Taliesin was married we may be allowed to presume. For the Triads record that he had a son named Avaon, who is commemorated for the intrepidity of his martial prowess. He is, on this account, numbered amongst "the bull-like chieftains of Britain," as well as amongst those, "who continued slaughtering on their graves," as if to mark the obstinate and invincible character of his valour. Avaon appears to have been initiated by his father in the peaceful pursuits of the muse, before he became so determined a votary of the god of war; for a line, traditionally said to be of his composition, has been transmitted to the present day†. Taliesin is supposed to have died about the year 570.

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* There were two contemporary bards of this name, Merddin ab Morvryn, and Merddin Emrys. The former is the one, of whom mention is here made. Both bards are known to English readers, under the indiscriminate and corrupt appellation of *Merlin*.

† This specimen of Avaon's poetical talent is preserved, among other

None of the ancient Welsh poets seem to have been so thoroughly versed in the Bardic or Druidical mysteries, as Taliesin. His poems abound in allusions of this character, that are now, for the most part, unintelligible. They prove, however, the direction his studies must have taken in an age particularly favourable to the cultivation of any dark or occult science. But, even if this had not been evident from his writings, we should still have had his own acknowledgment of his attainments in this respect. On various occasions he boasts of his proficiency in the mystical lore of the Druids, and even assumes to himself a superiority, in this species of knowledge, over the other poets of the day†. The doctrine of metempsychosis in particular, which is known to have been espoused by the Druidical sages, appears to have been a favourite theme. Two or three of Taliesin's effusions are expressly devoted to it, and, from the various transmigrations which they represent the bard to have undergone, supply a singular instance of the influence of a wild theory upon a powerful and creative imagination. It is, therefore, evident, that Taliesin's education, as well, perhaps, as the bent of his mind, favoured

similar relics, in the *Welsh Archaiology*, and is thus introduced—"Hast thou not heard what was sung by Avaon, of honest muse, the son of Taliesin, 'The cheek cannot conceal the affliction of the heart?'"

† Among other expressions of this nature are the following:—

"I am Taliesin,
With the flowing speech of a prophet."
Arch. of Wales, vol. i. p. 25.

"I am Taliesin,
Chief of the bards of the Welsh.
I am versed in every sprig
In the cave of the chief prophet."—*Id. ib.* p. 34.

And again,

"I am the depository of song, I am a man of letters."
Id. ib. p. 37.

the acquisition of Druidical learning; but it is at the same time to be collected from his productions, that these abstruse researches had not prevented his inquiries into the holier mysteries of Christianity, which were, at this period, an object of particular cultivation amongst the religious devotees in Wales. It is to be presumed, that his knowledge on this subject was chiefly formed, or, at least, greatly improved, by his residence with Cadog; and the ascendancy it acquired over his mind sufficiently appears from several of his effusions. But it is also observable, that, agreeably with the crude notions of that age, the mystical doctrines, rather than the genuine spirit, of the Christian faith had engaged his attention; and that these were impregnated in his mind with the mythological peculiarities of his Druidical creed. However, that he was regularly admitted into the rites of the church may be inferred from the Triads, which commemorate him as one of "the Christian or baptized bards" of that age*, when, it is to be presumed, such a distinction was not very common.

But the acquirements of Taliesin were not confined to mystical or theological erudition. It is evident from his writings, that he had made considerable progress in classical learning, such as was generally cultivated in that age, when the crude offspring of monkish Latinity held divided empire, over the region of taste, with the immortal productions of Greece and Rome. We cannot feel any surprise, therefore, if the poems of Taliesin should be found to contain many pedantic imitations of the ancient writers. This is, in fact, the case; for not only are several of his effusions interlarded with Latin phrases, but he has even endeavoured to engraft upon our national poetry the metres

* See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. ii. p. 437, for a translation of this Triad.

of the classical authors, without regard to their incompatibility with the genius of the Welsh tongue. But it is not in the structure alone of Taliesin's poetry that his classical knowledge betrays itself: a better taste is occasionally manifested in the happy allusions which he makes to the works of the Latin and Greek poets. In these instances, which, however, are not numerous, he borrows the spirit of their effusions without slavishly adopting their language or style, and is content to present us with the beauties of the originals in the characteristic attire of his own mountain muse*.

About eighty poems have descended to us under the name of Taliesin†, from which we may form some idea of the fecundity of his genius, since we may reasonably conclude, that what have thus survived the ravages of so many centuries formed but a small proportion of the original number. None remain, it is true, of equal length and importance with the Gododin of Aneurin; but the works of Taliesin, taken in the aggregate, are far more voluminous than those of any other contemporary bard. In their character they are extremely diversified, embracing not only a great variety of subjects, but also most of the metres then used in Wales, in addition to those already alluded to of an extraneous origin. The themes of his muse are, for the most part, mystical, theological, historical, and elegiac. There are besides many of a miscellaneous character not to be referred to any specific class. His historical effusions

* Among the ancient poets, whom Taliesin appears to have read, (to judge from the allusions here adverted to,) are Homer, Pindar, and Virgil. See the *Cambrian Register*, vol. iii. p. 106. It is probable enough, that his acquaintance with these writers was first formed during his residence with Cadog.

† The poems of Taliesin, as well as of all the other early Welsh bards, are preserved in the first volume of the *Archaiology of Wales*, the most valuable work hitherto published in connection with Welsh literature.

are, necessarily, the most interesting; and, as they are also the most numerous, they form a body of notices of the highest value in illustrating the early annals of Britain.

A regard for historical truth makes it necessary, however, here to admit, that the effusions of Taliesin are not often distinguished by those glowing and vivid beauties, which form the peculiar ornament of the muse. This may be ascribed as well to the servility with which he seems to have cultivated the mere mechanism of his poetry, as to the habitual exercise of his mind in the wild mysticism of Druidical learning. Hence the artificial and generally obscure character of his productions, such especially as are not purely historical, and whose faults in this respect are but rarely compensated by the flashes of genius, or the indications of a correct judgment. Yet his poetry must not be regarded as a mere literary monster,

> ——————nullâ virtute redemptum
> A vitiis.——

Occasional bursts of fine feeling and true poetical fancy serve to irradiate the prevailing gloom, as also to mark the genuine character of a mind, which had been more corrupted by the rude prejudices of the times than by its own natural propensities. Its *vivida vis* sometimes displays itself in spite of the opposition of custom and education, as in the following original and picturesque passage*:—

* See *Arch. of Wales*, vol. i. p. 40. For the benefit of the Welsh reader, the original lines are here transcribed:—

"Gwelais wyr gorsawr,
A ddygyrchynt awr;
Gwelais waed ar lawr
Rhag rhwthr cleddyvawr:
Glesynt esgyll gwawr,
Esgorynt yn waewawr."

Llywarch

I saw the mighty men,
Who thronged together at the shout;
I saw blood on the ground
From the assault of swords:
They tinged with blue the wings of the morning,
When they flung forth their ashen spears.

The last two lines convey a fine and uncommon image, not more remarkable for its boldness than for its accuracy, and may be placed in competition with some of the happiest thoughts of the most renowned poets.

Nor is it always in mere isolated passages that the native vigour of Taliesin's genius is evinced. In one or two instances it pervades the whole composition; and, among his numerous effusions, two may be selected as being singularly exempt from the more prominent characteristics of his muse. These are "The Battle of Argoed Llwyvain", and "The Mead Song" already adverted to. Extracts from these will exemplify what has been now said. The first in order are from a spirited, yet faithful, translation by the late Mr. Whitehead.

THE BATTLE OF ARGOED*.

Morning rose,—the issuing sun
Saw the dreadful fight begun,
And that sun's descending ray
Closed the battle, closed the day†.

Llywarch Hên, it may be remarked, employs the same beautiful image as that contained in the close of this passage, when he says, "Like the wings of the dawn was the gleaming of the lance of Duawg."

"Esgyll gwawr oedd waewawr Duawg."

* *Arch. of Wales*, vol. i. p. 53.

† The poet is thought, in this passage, to have had in mind the following line of Virgil,—

Te, veniente die, te, decedente, canebat.

Georg. l. iv. l. 466.

But,

Flamddwyn* pour'd his rapid bands,
Legions four o'er Reged's lands.
The num'rous host, from side to side,
Pour'd destruction far and wide,
From Argoed's summits, forest-crown'd,
To steep Arvynydd's utmost bound.
Short their triumph, short their sway,
Born and ended with the day.

* * * *
* * * *

Havoc, havoc raged around,
Many a carcase strew'd the ground;
Ravens drank the purple flood,
Raven-plumes were dyed with blood:
Frighted crowds from place to place,
Eager, hurrying, breathless, pale,
Spread the news of their disgrace,
Trembling as they told the tale.

The following extracts from "The Mead Song," which, as the reader will recollect, was presented by the poet to Maelgwn, in order to procure the release of his patron Elfin, are almost literal versions. They want the fire indeed of the foregoing specimens; but they afford an instance of a better taste than is generally to be discovered in the works of this bard; and, in particular, they illustrate that religious turn of mind, to which allusion has already been made.

THE MEAD SONG†.

To him that rules supreme, our sovereign Lord,
Creation's chief, by all that lives ador'd,

But, whatever resemblance there may been in the idea, it must be owned that this imitation is of a more equivocal character than others that are to be found in the works of Taliesin.

* By this name, it is generally supposed, the Welsh bards have distinguished Ida, the celebrated leader of the Saxons. The word means, literally, "Flame-bearer."

† *Arch. of Wales*, vol. i. p. 22.

Who made the waters and sustains the skies,
Who gives and prospers all that's good and wise;
To him I'll pray, that Maelgwn ne'er may need
Exhaustless treasure of the sparkling mead,
Such as with mirth our hours hath often crown'd,
When from his horn the foaming draught went round.

* * * *

O, chief supreme, prince of the realms of peace,
Let Elfin's bondage, I beseech thee, cease,
Who, to the beauteous steeds given heretofore,
And wine, and ale, and mead, would give me more;
He in the paths of peace, if Heav'n so will,
Myriads of feasts shall give with honour still.

But we must not part with Taliesin without giving the reader a specimen of the general bent of his poetical talent. What has already been said on this point will serve sufficiently to introduce the following lines, in which the extravagance of a romantic fancy has been engrafted on the no less extravagant notions of Druidism. Some imaginary monster seems to be the object of the poet's description*.

There is a hideous beast
Between the deep and the shallow;
His jaws as wide as the Mountain of Peaks †:
Him death shall not overcome,
Nor hand nor blades.
There is the load of nine hundred wains
In the hair of his two paws;
One eye there is in his head,
Green like a sheet of ice;
There are three fountains
In the nape of his neck;
And sea-monsters thereon
Do swim through him.

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* Id. ib. p. 20.

† *Mynydd Mynnau*, here translated "Mountain of Peaks," is generally considered to be the name of the Alps.

In the same grotesque and unintelligible strain does Taliesin generally delight to present us with the inspirations of his muse. What his fancy has suggested takes, for the most part, its colouring from the influence of his mythological theories; and, when the natural force of his mind would have prompted him to be sublime, he is hurried by the current of his education to adopt what is mystical and perplexed. If he occasionally soar above this barbarous prejudice, it is only to make us regret the more that he should ever have been exposed to its despotism. By nature a poet, he became by habit, and, perhaps at length, by inclination, a rhapsodist. Unable or unwilling entirely to extricate himself from the maze in which he was involved, he has generally chosen, rather than abandon the paths of the muse, to prosecute his career in mystery and in darkness. But, amongst his wildest speculations, his most improbable fables, the energy of his genius, as we have already seen, sometimes breaks forth: however impenetrable the gloom of his conceptions, we can occasionally recognize the commanding spirit by which this "palpable obscure" was created.

The foregoing remarks have reference chiefly to the speculative effusions of Taliesin; for most of his historical poems are of a different character. If they are not generally distinguished by the ebullitions of genius or the refinements of taste, they possess features of a more important description in the homely fidelity of their narrative: artless and immethodical as they may be, they are still valuable as illustrating the events of an age, of which we have, comparatively, such scanty memorials. This peculiarity, as has been before noticed*, formed a remarkable distinction of

* See the Life of Aneurin, p. 31, *supra*.

the early Welsh poetry, and among it that of Taliesin, where it is unmixed with his occult learning, merits, in this point of view, a pre-eminent rank. Either for this reason, or on account of the multiplicity and variety of his effusions, Taliesin has, from time immemorial, enjoyed amongst his countrymen the title of "Chief of the Bards;" and, while the language of the Cymry continues to be cultivated, this traditional honour will still accompany his name. But it may be said of Taliesin, in a few words, that he has been more praised than read, more read than understood. And, whilst he has been immoderately extolled for merits that did not belong to him, those, which are really his own, have never been duly appreciated. For, after all, it may truly be said of him, that he wants no borrowed plumes to maintain his rank among the most eminent of the ancient Welsh poets.

LLYWARCH HEN*.

THE fifth and sixth centuries, as has been already incidentally noticed in the foregoing pages, were remarkably signalized by the long and arduous struggle, which the Britons maintained in the defence of their liberties. The hostility of the Saxons, originating in treachery, and continued in violence, was peculiarly qualified to rouse into action those powerful energies of the mind, which were displayed during the period under consideration, and which communicated their influence as well to the strains of the poet as to the sword of the warrior. Even the names that have descended to the present day bear ample testimony to this fact; but the remoteness of the age, and the desolating events that have filled up the interval, fully justify the conclusion that the chieftains and bards of that era, of whom we now retain any record, must have borne but a small proportion to those, whose history is entirely lost to us.

In no part of the island were the conflicts, consequent on the incursion of the Saxons, more frequent or more severe than in that portion of North Britain, which was anciently called Cumbria. The natives of this extensive district enjoyed a community of language as well as of descent with the inhabitants of Wales, and retained in the name of their country the evidence of this identity†. Ex-

* It may be proper here to mention, that a great part of this Life is borrowed from that which has already appeared, from the same pen, in the *Cambro-Briton*. See vol. i. p. 287.

† The district, called Cumbria, embraced a larger extent of territory than the modern Cumberland, which seems to be a corruption of the old

posed on the one side to the Saxons, and to the Picts on the other, the Cumbrians supported a long and unequal contest with varying fortunes, before they were compelled to give way to the united and overwhelming force of their enemies. It was the close of these eventful times, that produced those gifted individuals, whose poetical fame still communicates a celebrity to the first epoch of Welsh literature*.

Amongst the Cumbrians of note, whether as warriors or poets, who lived during this period, Llywarch Hên, or Llywarch the Aged, fills an eminent place: eminent for his rank and genius, and still more so for his years and his misfortunes. He was descended from a long line of princes, or military chieftains, who had, in more propitious times, exercised a supreme authority over the whole island. His father was Elidyr Lydanwyn, a prince of the Northern Britons, and fourth in descent from Coel, who, according to the British Chronicle, was the seventy-fifth king of Britain. Nor were the honours, which Llywarch claimed from his maternal ancestry, of an inferior character. His mother, Gwawr, was the daughter of Brychan, an Irish chieftain, whose grandfather, Cormac Mac Carbery, enjoyed a sovereign sway in the sister island. This Brychan became an exile from his native land, and finally sought refuge in Wales, in the history of which country he is distinguished as the father of one of the "three holy families"†.

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name. It comprised all that part of the North anciently occupied by the Cymry, and reached even to the borders of Scotland.

* The reasons for including the poets of North Britain among the ornaments of Welsh literature have been detailed in the Life of Aneurin. See p. 21, *suprà*. Nor must it be forgotten, with respect to these poets, that the asylum they found in Wales proved at once the nurse of their genius and the guardian of their fame.

† Brychan settled in that part of South Wales, which has since been

The patrimonial possessions of Llywarch were known by the name of Argoed, which has been reasonably conjectured to be a part of the present Cumberland, bordering to the west on the great Forest of Celyddon or Caledonia*: and that he exercised a sovereign power over this territory may be inferred from the Historical Triads, in which he is denominated one of the "disinterested princes of Britain." We learn too, from the same authority, that Llywarch spent a part of his early life in the court of Arthur, who had been raised, as we have before seen, by a general vote to the supreme command of the states of Britain. In the ancient records alluded to he is commemorated as one of the "three intelligent bards," one of the "three counselling knights," and one of the "three free and discontented guests" of the court of Arthur, one of whose chief places of residence, according to the Triads, was in the North. It also appears from a poem of Llywarch's, entitled "An Elegy on Geraint ab Erbin," that he fought under Arthur in one of his battles†; and we learn moreover, from his "Ode to Maenwyn," that his youth was chiefly passed in warlike pursuits, as well against the predatory banditti, who seem to have infested the northern parts of the island in that age, as against the common enemy. This may be collected from the two following stanzas, which occur in the poem last adverted to:—

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called, after him, Brecknockshire. He is recorded in the Triads as having "introduced the Christian faith to the Cymry, who were before without faith."—See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. ii. p. 169.

* Argoed is a Welsh word, implying, literally, "on or above the wood," and occurs in Wales as the name of several places thus situated. It therefore points out the precise nature of Llywarch's territory.

† This was the battle of Llongborth, mentioned in p. 9, *supra*.

Maenwyn, when I was in thy condition,
With youth attendant on me;
The outlaw would not have broken my boundary.

Maenwyn, whilst I was as thou art,
Following the course of my youth,
The enemy loved not the fury of my resentment.

How long Llywarch remained at Arthur's court it cannot be possible to determine; but, since he is recorded as one of its "discontented guests," it may be inferred that his stay there was of no great duration. Probably the troubles in which his country was involved, summoned him early away to join the ranks of its defenders. For he does not appear to have taken any part in the civil war between Arthur and Medrod; and, when the former fell in the fatal conflict of Camlan, Llywarch was most probably engaged in defending the North with Urien, whom, in his elegy on that chieftain, he calls his cousin, his lord, and his protector*. Llywarch, with his numerous issue, united his force to that of Urien and his sons upon this occasion against the growing power of the Saxons; and there are even grounds for presuming that they all fought under the

* Urien was a cousin-german of Llywarch. The bard himself alludes to this relationship in his Poem on his Old Age, where, speaking of one of his sons, he says—

My son was a hero, and splendid was his fame:
And he was the nephew of Urien.

And that Llywarch and Urien were on terms of particular intimacy is apparent from another allusion in the same poem, where the poet thus apostrophizes himself:

The horn, given to thee by Urien,
With the wreath of gold around its rim,
Blow in it, if thou art in danger.

The "Elegy on Urien" contains, likewise, many testimonies to this fact even stronger than the preceding.

same banners in the disastrous battle of Cattraeth, in which Urien commanded. At least, in the Gododin of Aneurin, which records that calamity, four of the sons of Llywarch are expressly named as being then engaged; and there is even an apparent allusion to the aged warrior himself and the force under his command*. But, whether he participated or not in the ruinous consequences of this conflict, we find that the loss of his patrimony, and the fall of most of his sons, was the melancholy result of the unequal struggle in which his country had been engaged. Thus destitute, he was compelled, like the father of Aneurin, to find his safety in flight, with such of his children as had survived; and a kindred fate induced him also to seek an asylum in Wales, where he was hospitably received by Cynddylan, at that time prince of Powys. To this the bard gratefully alludes in his elegy on the death of that chieftain, and from which it also appears, that Cynddylan resided at that time at Pengwern, or Shrewsbury, the ancient seat of the princes of Powys before the inroads of the Saxons had driven them to Mathraval†.

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* The passage in the Gododin, which appears to refer to this circumstance is as follows:—

Grievously would I be afflicted for,
Fondly would I cherish,
The illustrious solitary one,
And the men of Argoed.

It is hardly possible to apply the expression of "the illustrious solitary one," when associated with the "men of Argoed," to any other person but Llywarch. And if it have that allusion, it proves that an intimate friendship existed between him and Aneurin.

† The following lines in the "Elegy on Cynddylan" contain the notice of this fact:—

Stand forth, ye virgins, and behold the habitation of Cynddylan,
The palace of Pengwern, is it not in flames!

When Llywarch was received by Cynddylan, he found him and his brother Elvan engaged in a severe contest with a people, whom the poet calls, indiscriminately, Loegrians and Franks*. They were probably a mixture of such of the adjoining population, including the Roman Britons, as were not then known by the name of Saxons. The expatriated chief immediately took an active part with Cynddylan in this quarrel; and the battles which ensued, proved, most probably, fatal to the rest of his sons, whose death Llywarch laments, with a parental and affecting fondness, in his "Elegy on his Old Age." We find too, from his poem on Cynddylan, that the issue of this war proved no less disastrous to that prince and his brother, whose fate the bard pathetically deplores in the following lines amongst many others.

> The hall of Cynddylan is silent to night
> After having lost its lord:—
> Great God of Mercy, what shall I do?
>
> The hall of Cynddylan, how gloomy seems its roof!
> Since the Loegrians have destroyed
> Cynddylan and Elvan of Powys.

It appears likewise from the same poem, that Cynddylan was buried at Bassa, probably the place now called Basschurch, in Shropshire. For the bard tells us, that

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* For an account of the first settlement of the Loegrians (Lloegrwys) in this island, as recorded in the Historical Triads, see the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. pp. 47 and 49. The name, originally, was confined in its application; but it appears, in process of time, to have become general in its reference to such of the inhabitants of Britain, excepting the Saxons, as were not Cymry; and in this sense it seems to be here used by Llywarch. The meaning of the term "Franks" is not so easily to be ascertained, unless it be supposed, that the Franks came over with the Saxons in such numbers, as to cause the introduction of their name as a distinct people.

The churches of Bassa are near to night
To the heir of Cyndrwyn:
The grave-house of fair Cynddylan.

No clue is left whereby we can ascertain with precision the abode of Llywarch after the death of his friend and patron. But it appears likely, from some passages in his poems, that his latter years, which formed a period of unmixed affliction, were spent in Powys. One of his effusions is addressed to the "Cuckoo of the Vale of Cuawg;" and, as it contains strong allusions to his wretched fate, it is likely that it was composed during the latter part of his life, when, accordingly, he may have resided in this vale, which has been conjectured to be in Montgomeryshire*. And it is to be collected from his "Elegy on his Old Age," that he afterwards resided at Llanvor in the county of Merioneth. But, wherever the evening of his days was consumed, it is certain that it was pregnant with sorrows, which he bewails in the most affecting strains in the elegy last mentioned, written after his connexion with Cynddylan was at an end, as is evident from the following passage, which also bears testimony to the infirmity under which he then laboured.

Before I went on crutches, I was bold,
I was admitted into the congress-house
Of Powys, the Paradise of the Cymry.

The bard farther appears from this poem to have been weighed down by the accumulated sufferings of age, sick-

* The Vale of Cuawg is so called, most probably, from a river of that name: and what almost confirms the conjecture is, that Llywarch, in the same poem, has an allusion to Aber Cuawg, the Mouth of the Cuawg, which may have been the very spot where he resided. There is a place in Montgomeryshire, near Machynlleth, still called Dol Giog, which may serve to identify the spot that is the object of our inquiry.

ness, and grief, while the agonizing remembrance of his blighted prosperity, and of all his sons, four and twenty in number, fallen a prey to the fury of battle, must have completed a picture of misery not easily to be paralleled. His sons were all of them military chieftains, and distinguished, as such, by the golden torques, of which some account has been given in the life of Aneurin*. The fact is mentioned by the venerable bard in the following lines:—

> Four and twenty sons I have had
> Wearing the golden wreath, leaders of armies.

The greater number of these fell, as already noticed, in the defence of their native land under Urien; but Llywarch enumerates at least four†, who were buried in North Wales, and who, consequently, must have met their fate in the wars of Cynddylan or of the other Welsh chieftains.

An old Welsh manuscript has preserved a fugitive stanza, ascribed to Llywarch, accompanied by an anecdote relating to the death of one of his sons, which may not be out of place here. It is there related that Gwên ab Llywarch had his horse killed under him in battle, and was himself slain some time afterwards. Subsequently to this the skull of the horse was placed, instead of a stepping-stone, over a small brook, near the scene of the animal's death. Llywarch happening soon afterwards to pass that way, the skull was pointed out to him by a companion, who informed him that it had belonged to the horse of his son Gwên. To this the bard replied in the following extempo-

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* See the note in p. 24, *supra*.

† These are Gwell, Sawyl, Llyngedwy, and Cynllug; and, apparently, may be added Pyll and Llavyr. The graves of the first four were at Rhiw Velen, Llangollen, Ammarch, and Llug: and, by inference, that of Llavyr appears to have been at Llorien.

rary stanza, which has at least the merit of being extremely natural to the occasion.

I have seen that horse's day,
(That horse, with the looks of a stag, the thrower up of sods,)
When none would have trodden on his jaw,
As he carried Gwên the son of Llywarch.

Whatever credit may be due to this trivial anecdote, it must, at least, be admitted that it is, by no means, improbable.

It is recorded of the venerable bard, that he ended his days at Llanvor, near Bala in Merionethshire. A secluded spot in that parish, which still bears the name of Old Llywarch's Cot, *Pabell Llywarch Hen*, serves to corroborate this tradition, as it was, in all probability, the last scene of that earthly pilgrimage, in which affliction had borne so great a share. The bard himself distinctly alludes, as before observed, to his residence in this neighbourhood in the "Elegy on his Old Age;" and the circumstances under which that elegy was written, prove that it must have been in the decline of his life. Dr. Davies, the celebrated author of the Latin-Welsh Dictionary, who lived in the early part of the seventeenth century, even goes so far as to state, that he had seen an inscription, apparently relating to Llywarch, in the parish church of Llanvor over a spot where the poet was traditionally said to have been interred. But, as all traces of this inscription have long disappeared, it may be too much now to rely upon it as an authentic memorial. Llywarch died about the middle of the seventh century, and, according to an immemorial tradition, at the patriarchal age of one hundred and fifty years*, after having long outlived his children, his friends,

* It is to be proved from the productions of Llywarch, that he was cotemporary both with Arthur and Cadwallon, and that he survived them

and every worldly blessing, which makes existence desirable. To use his own emphatic words,

> Wretched was the fate that was decreed
> To Llywarch on the night of his birth:
> Long pains, without being delivered of his load of sorrow*.

Of all the early Welsh poetry that of Llywarch Hên is most distinguished by its uniformity as well as by its artless simplicity. It has none of those mystical features, which mark the strains of Taliesin, and is alike free from the obscurities occasionally observable in the Gododin. The poems of Llywarch possess a sort of unaffected and primitive character, which is among the strongest proofs of their genuineness. The themes too, which the bard has selected, are for the most part such as were, in a manner, interwoven with his own wayward destiny: the battles in which he had fought, the loss of his territory, of his children, and of his patrons, his various sufferings, his infirmities, and his destitute old age. They are, in a word, the themes of sorrow, and, springing, as they did, from the heart of the poet, cannot fail to find a responsive vibration in that of the

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both. Arthur died, as we have previously seen, in the year 542, at which period Llywarch was, most probably, about forty years of age. Now, as he also outlived Cadwallon, which his elegy on that chieftain sufficiently proves, he must at that time have been above one hundred and forty; for the death of Cadwallon is generally appropriated to the year 646. This circumstance, when united with the current tradition on the subject, is sufficient to justify the age above imputed to the venerable bard.

* This stanza may be compared with the following verse in the Book of Job: "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, there is a man child conceived."—Ch. 3. v. 3. Indeed there is a remarkable affinity between the whole of this affecting elegy and the ancient book just quoted. The circumstances, under which the two lamentations were made, are not very dissimilar. The loss of dominion, of fortune, and of children is common to both.

reader. But what communicates to the strains of Llywarch, as to the Gododin of Aneurin, their greatest value, is their historical character. And the memorials they contain are not of a mere hearsay description: the poet himself was a chief actor in the scenes he represents, as well as a principal sufferer in the calamities he records,—

——— "quæque ipse miserrima vidit
Et quorum pars magna fuit."———

The poems ascribed to Llywarch, as preserved in the Archaiology of Wales, are twelve in number. Six of these are of the historical character just alluded to, and the remainder are devoted to moral or aphoristic subjects. The historical poems, however, bear, in length, a proportion of three to one to the others, and embrace a body of notices respecting the events of the age in which they were written, that, for reasons already mentioned, are peculiarly valuable, provided their genuineness be satisfactorily ascertained. And this seems to be demonstrable from two features, by which the effusions in question are prominently distinguished. One is the uniformity of sentiment, language, and style, that pervades these as well as all the effusions ascribed to this bard; and the other is the frequent allusions to himself as the author that occur in the historical pieces. To this it may also be added that the metre, in which the whole are written, is the most ancient of all those known to Welsh poetry. It is entitled the Warrior's Triplet*, and its inartificial construction affords abundant evidence of the antiquity traditionally assigned to it. It is not too strong an assumption, then, to set down all the

* In the original, *Englyn Milur*. It was a metre particularly in use amongst the members of the Druidical institution, by whom it was employed as the vehicle of their aphoristic instructions.

poems imputed to Llywarch, as his, marked, as they all are, by the same simple and energetic narrative, or by the same artless display of sententious morality. Alike homely in their sentiment and style, they must have been the production of an age, to which the artifices of poetical refinement, whether in diction or thought, were wholly unknown; and in such an age Llywarch lived.

A few specimens of the poetry of this bard, in addition to those already incidentally quoted, shall now be given; and, to retain as much as possible the character of the originals, the translations shall be strictly literal, without any endeavour to throw them into a metrical form. Yet it must not be forgotten, that the passages will thus be exposed to a disadvantage common to all poetry in its transfusion from one tongue to another. The first extract contains the two stanzas or triplets, with which the "Elegy on Geraint" commences, and presents us with a flattering portrait of that chieftain*.

When Geraint was born, the portals of heaven were open,
Christ vouchsafed what was supplicated,
A countenance beaming with beauty, the glory of Britain.

Let all celebrate the blood-stain'd Geraint,
Their lord; I too will praise Geraint,
The Saxon's foe, the friend of saints.

This Geraint, who was a warrior of considerable celebrity, and is commemorated in the Triads as having commanded a fleet against the Saxons, fell fighting against them in the battle of Llongborth, of which some account was given in the life of Arthur. To the sanguinary character of this

* Similar qualifications are ascribed to Geraint in the Gododin of Aneurin, and in a strain of high panegyric. It would, therefore, appear that he bore a share in the battle of Cattraeth.

battle, and the distinguished part performed in it by Geraint, the bard frequently alludes; and the following stanzas on the subject will be found forcible and picturesque.

At Llongborth I saw the weapons
Of heroes, with gore fast dripping,
And after the shout a dreadful descent to earth.

At Llongborth I saw the conflicting edges of blades,
Men quaking with terror, and blood on the brow,
Before Geraint the worthy son of his father.

At Llongborth I saw severe toiling
Amidst the stones, and ravens feasting on entrails,
And on the chieftain's brow a crimson gash.

The following lines, in the "Elegy on Urien," paint also, in strong colours, the character of that warrior, while they, at the same time, evince the poetical powers of the bard, who thus addresses his spear.

Let me be guided onward, thou fierce ashen spear! sullen
As the ocean's surly laughter was the expanding tumult of war,
Where raged Urien, fiery champion.

Like the eagle, in his onset a bold and generous foe,
Of war the torment, secure of conquest,
Was Urien with the grasp of fire.

Nor are Llywarch's descriptions confined to the horrors of battle: the following allusions to the desolate mansion of Urien, when its lord was no more, are extracted from among many others of a similar character, and prove that the talents of the poet were equally adapted to the pathetic.

This hearth, will it not be overgrown with nettles!
Whilst its protector was yet alive,
More familiarized with it was the foot of the needy petitioner.

* * * *

This buttress here, and that one yonder,
More congenial around them would have been
The joyous clamour of the convivial host and the voice of harmony.

The "Elegy on Cynddylan," Prince of Powys, is likewise remarkable for many passages of a kindred nature with those last quoted. Indeed, whenever ideas of a melancholy or affecting tendency occurred to the poet, he seems to have been loath to abandon them until he had exhausted all the variety of turns his muse was capable of imparting to them. This is a feature, singularly characteristic of the elegiac poems of Llywarch, and may be added to those already enumerated in proof of their genuineness. The two stanzas, that follow, introduce the "Elegy on Cynddylan;" and the moral turn, with which they respectively close, forms another distinction of the early Welsh poetry.

Stand forth, ye maidens, and behold the dwelling of Cynddylan,
The royal palace of Pengwern*, is it not in flames?
Woe to the young, that long to enter into social ties!

One tree, which the twining woodbine embraces,
Shall haply escape:—
But what God wills, let that be done.

The succeeding extracts are selected from the same poem, and are all illustrative of the remarks that have just been made. Indeed, the whole Elegy is a continued recurrence to the melancholy recollections of the poet's past happiness, while an inmate of the hospitable residence of Cynddylan, when contrasted with the misery to which he was afterwards exposed. Many of these affecting reminiscences are in the true spirit of grief, and could only have emanated from the most acute suffering: if they are not always highly poetical, they are something more; they are deeply and afflictingly natural.

The hall of Cynddylan, art thou not bereft of thy wonted appearance!
Thy shield is in the grave:—
Whilst he lived there was no broken roof.

* The old Welsh name for Shrewsbury.

The hall of Cynddylan is without love to night,
Since he that own'd it is no more—
Ah, Death, it will be but a short time he will leave me!

* * * * *

The hall of Cynddylan is gloomy to night,
Without fire, without a family—
My overflowing tears gush out.

The hall of Cynddylan,—it pierces me to see it,
Without a covering, without a fire:
My chieftain is no more, and I myself still live!

The following stanzas have reference to a town destroyed in the wars of that period: it was situate in the county of Salop, and the site of it is still to be traced.

The white town in the valley,
Joyful were its inmates when affording mutual aid in battle;
But its citizens—are they not gone?

The white town, between Tren and Trodwydd*,
More usual in it was to behold the fractured shield
Coming from battle, than the returning ox at eve.

In the next and last extract the bard again reverts to his sorrowful reflections, as he beholds from an eminence the country, which had been the scene of his vanished enjoyments.

Have not my eyes gazed on a delightful land
From the high mount of Gorwynion?
Long is the course of the sun, longer far my remembrances.

Have not I gazed, from the lofty city of Wrecon†,
In the verdant valley of Freuer,
With grief for the destruction of my social friends?

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* The ancient names of two rivers in Shropshire. The first is most probably to be identified with the modern Tern, which flows into the Severn near Acham. The "White town," above mentioned, is conjectured to have been the present Whittington.

† Wroxeter, near Shrewsbury, called, by the Romans, Uriconium.

Such are the strains of Llywarch the Aged, who, whether as a poet or a warrior, must ever be ranked among the most eminent Britons of the epoch in which he lived. His years, his infirmities, and his various sufferings serve also to enhance the interest, with which his life and character may be contemplated even after the lapse of so many centuries.

ST. DAVID.

THE original introduction of the Christian faith into Britain is a subject that has employed the pens of many eminent writers, and some of whom, in the pardonable excess of a pious zeal, have even ascribed to the Apostle of the Gentiles himself the glory of having first imparted the truths of the Gospel to our uncivilized ancestors*. On a point, however, so involved in obscurity, speculative opinions should be received with caution, yet, at the same time, with indulgence, as aiming to compensate for the necessary absence of all positive testimony. At whatever period, or by whatever agency, Christianity first shed its light upon this island, it is a lamentable truth, that its morning beams were long overcast by the clouds of barbarism and of error: and many were the ages that had elapsed before the Sun of the Gospel burst forth in its full meridian blaze. During the first five centuries, especially, numerous causes conspired to retard the diffusion of this celestial light: the lingering darkness of paganism, the long succession of wars and civil convulsions, and the wild innovations of fanaticism and heresy, opposed, in their turns, the progress of Revelation among the natives of Britain. It was about the close of the period alluded to, that the state of the British church began to assume a more prosperous aspect. Some Gallican missionaries, sent, as it would appear, at the special solicitation of the Britons themselves, succeeded in disseminating a

* This point has been discussed in the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 282, and vol. ii. p. 316, and particularly with reference to the ancient Welsh authorities that relate to the subject.

more religious and orthodox spirit throughout the island*; but, above all, in Wales and Cornwall, the peculiar settlements of the ancient inhabitants, the cause of Christianity acquired, from this period, a progressive stability, and its advocates an encreased zeal. Hence, in the fifth and sixth centuries, Wales, in particular, was distinguished by the number of its pious divines, who laboured, with successful assiduity, in the propagation of their holy faith, notwithstanding the intestine divisions, by which the country was then agitated.

Among the individuals, who enlisted themselves in the sacred cause, the subject of this memoir holds an exalted rank, signalized as he was, in a remarkable manner, both for his piety and his zeal. And the same qualities, which thus procured him a pre-eminence in the estimation of his cotemporaries, have served to canonize his fame in the eyes of posterity. He, accordingly, fills an illustrious place in the ecclesiastical annals of Wales; and even the dignity of a tutelar saint has been conferred upon him by the popular voice†. Nor have the aids of legend and fiction been wanting to the consummation of his ambiguous renown. But it becomes the duty of the impartial biographer to detach from the character of this celebrated champion of Christianity those extraneous decorations, which serve rather to shade than to brighten his genuine fame.

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* The most eminent of these were Germanus and Lupus, Bishops of Auxerre and Troyes, who were commissioned more particularly to oppose the doctrines of Pelagianism, then making considerable progress among the Christianized Britons. For an account of their miraculous victory over the Saxons, called *Victoria Alleluiatica*, see the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. pp. 139 and 262.

† It should be noticed, however, that this honour is entirely of foreign, and, comparatively speaking, of modern growth. The old Welsh records make no mention of such a distinction, as belonging to St. David.

St. David, or Dewi, according to his national appellation, was the son of Sandde, who was himself of the ecclesiastical profession, and distinguished by the sanctity of his character. This Sandde was the son or grandson,—for authorities differ on this point,—of Ceredig, a chief of Cumbrian descent, who gave name to that portion of South Wales, which has since been called Cardiganshire. The father of Ceredig was Cunedda, who possessed a sovereign power in the North of England, but who was compelled, by the troubles of the period, to seek his safety in exile. He accordingly, with his numerous issue, settled in Wales, where he possessed some territory in right of his wife, and where other lands were allotted to him and his children as a recompence for their services in the expulsion of the Irish, who then infested the Welsh coast. Cunedda is celebrated in the Historical Triads for having been the first to grant lands and privileges to the Church; and most of his sons are recorded to have embraced a religious life. St. David's mother was Non, whose name is to be found among the Saints of the British Church. She was the daughter of Gynyr, a chieftain of Pembrokeshire, who, like Cunedda, is commemorated for having devoted his patrimony to religious uses. Gynyr had for his wife Anna, daughter of Gwrthevyr, or Vortimer, the eighty-third king of Britain, and son of the renowned Vortigern*. Thus, both by the

* It is remarkable that all the accounts of St. David, whether historical or legendary, concur in representing this Anna as the sister of Arthur, but who was, in fact, married to Llew, by whom she became the mother of Medrod. See *suprà*, p. 4. This error, for such it obviously is, can only have arisen from the desire, so much indulged, of throwing every possible lustre on the fame of St. David. A reference to dates, however, will prove that he could not have been the grand-nephew of Arthur; for, although he was contemporary with that prince, he must have been at least fifty years older. See the *Cambrian Biography* under the name of Anna.

paternal and maternal lines, St. David was of a noble lineage: and it is worthy of notice, that, amongst his ancestors, so many should be remarkable for the same holy zeal, that has conferred on his own name so great a celebrity.

The place and time of St. David's birth have been variously related, and, in no instance perhaps, with precise accuracy. From the most probable statements, his native place was that, which has since been peculiarly dedicated to his memory, under the name of St. David's, in Pembrokeshire, but at that time called Mynyw, or Menevia*. The period of his birth may be placed about the middle of the fifth century†, when, according to the enthusiastic language of an old writer, he was sent by heaven as a compensation for the losses his country had sustained through the hostility of the Saxons.

If the popular histories of St. David were deserving of any credit, we might believe that his birth was accompanied by many miraculous circumstances‡, and that the strange precocity of his talents and piety prefigured, in his early infancy, the distinguished part he was destined to act. But these and other similar notices may securely be resigned to the lovers of the marvellous and romantic, without deducting any thing from the authentic memorials of the Cambrian

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* Menevia appears to have been the Romanized version of the old Welsh name.

† It will thus appear, that the Life of St. David is rather misplaced with respect to the chronological order. But, as he was contemporary with all those, whose lives have already been given, the anachronism, if such it may be called, can be of no great importance.

‡ According to the legendary accounts, his birth was foretold to St. Patrick, by a divine vision, about thirty years before it happened, and the important event took place on the sea-coast in the midst of a violent tempest, while the immediate spot, where the saint was born, enjoyed all the brightness of a summer's sun.

saint. According to these, he was, at an early age, designed for the offices of religion, and was, with this view, placed under the care of Paulinus, or Pawl Hên, a celebrated personage in the ecclesiastical annals of that period. Paulinus had just before founded a college or monastery, in Carmarthenshire, since called Whitland Abbey, and, in the language of the country, Ty Gwyn ar Dav. Here it was that St. David received his education*, and he is recorded to have continued a pupil of Paulinus for ten years, profiting, in an eminent degree, by the instructions of his preceptor, whose character, both for his learned acquirements and a rigid practice of the moral duties, has been the subject of particular eulogy†. It may, therefore, reasonably be inferred, that the auspicious circumstances of St. David's education, operating upon the natural bent of his mind, conduced, in a peculiar manner, to his subsequent distinction.

St. David, upon quitting Paulinus, returned to his native place, and seems to have resolved upon leading, for some time at least, a life of seclusion. Accordingly, retiring to the valley of Rhos, in the vicinity of the present St. David's, he there laid the foundation of a religious community, of which several of his countrymen, who were most remarkable for their Christian zeal, became afterwards members. Among these are to be found the names of Teilo and Padarn, both of them distinguished in the History of the British Saints, and to whom several churches in Wales are dedicated. The discipline, which St. David established in

* It is singular that Leland and other writers should have placed Paulinus and his pupil in the Isle of Wight. The resemblance of the name to Whitland, remote as it is, may have been the cause of this error.

† Leland, following former authors, calls him "virum linguæ eruditionis, tum præterea vitæ continentissimæ."

this monastic retreat, is represented as of the most rigorous nature. He enjoined amongst his associates the strictest attention to those virtues, which, in the infancy of Christianity, were supposed to constitute the chief ornament of its votaries. Prayer, watchings, toil, abstinence*, and self-denial of every mortifying description, formed the general object of those rules, which the Saint and his pious fraternity had prescribed for their daily and implicit observance. Yet their religion was not exclusively of a selfish and ascetic character. What they denied to themselves they seem freely to have bestowed on others. The relief of the needy and distressed was, therefore, one of their favourite occupations; and, not content with administering to the temporal wants of their countrymen, they extended their benevolence also to their eternal welfare, by disseminating among them the truths of divine revelation. We accordingly find St. David and his fellow ecclesiastics, Teilo and Padarn, commemorated in the Historical Triads for these works of charity, and on which account they are distinguished as the "three benign visitants†." That this has reference to the period, when St. David and his companions enjoyed their religious retirement in the vale of Rhos, is obvious from the corresponding testimony of other memorials, that ascribe to this pious community the exercise of similar virtues‡.

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* All the memorials of St. David concur in this; and Leland particularizes herbs and water as the only sustenance of the pious brotherhood. A water-fall in the vicinity still bears the name of *Pistyll Dewi*, or David's Waterfall, and in the old Welsh records the saint is called *Dewi Ddyvrwr*, David the Waterman. Whether these circumstances have any reference to the abstemiousness spoken of in the text, it is left to the ingenuity of the reader to determine.

† For a translation of this Triad, see the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 170.

‡ This is particularly mentioned by Giraldus Cambrensis, who says, that reading, praying, and feeding the poor, constituted the chief occupations of

During this retreat, it is said, St. David and his associates experienced considerable molestation from one of the neighbouring chieftains, who, from envy of their virtues, or a capricious dislike of their severe habits, seems to have been bent on the destruction of the society. However, such was the unrepining patience with which the pious brotherhood endured his persecution, that his hostility was converted into friendship, and he became, at length, their patron and their protector*.

It was from the most probable accounts at the commencement of the sixth century†, while St. David and his friends still continued in their monastic seclusion, that the Pelagian Heresy, which, about a century earlier, had been apparently suppressed by the exertions of Germanus and Lupus, again spread its contagious influence through the British churches. Dubricius, or Dyvrig, at that period Archbishop of Caerlleon, and consequently Primate of Wales, beheld the revival of this pestilence, with an alarm natural to his responsible station; and he, accordingly, convoked a general synod at a place, since called Llanddewi Brevi, in Cardiganshire, for the purpose of refuting the errors of the Pelagians‡.

St. David and his associates: and in this he is followed by John of Teignmouth.

* Giraldus, and, after him, Leland, give the name of Boias to this chieftain. But the Welsh history has no account of him under this appellation, in which there appears to be some mistake.

† The most probable date is 519. Some, however, fix it at 522; and Usher goes even so far back as 474.

‡ According to Leland, who seems here, as in former instances, to have followed Giraldus, Llanddewi Brevi, or St. David's of the Lowing, took its name from the success of the holy man's eloquence (q. d. *mugitus*) against the Pelagians. There is something, however, too fanciful in this hypothesis, to allow of its adoption. Whatever may have been the particular origin of the name in question, it seems to have had some connexion with

This assembly was numerously attended by individuals of the first distinction, both laymen and ecclesiastics, brought together, it may be presumed, as well by a curiosity to witness so important a debate, as by an anxiety for the preservation of the orthodox faith. For a long time the consultation appeared to be unproductive of any decisive result: and the advocates of the church had the mortification of finding, that, notwithstanding the best exertions of their oratory and their zeal, the champions of Pelagianism were still unsubdued. In this extremity it occurred to Paulinus, who was present on the occasion, to have recourse to the assistance of his former disciple, of whose talents and sanctity he spoke in those terms of praise, which his experience of them so well justified. Messengers were accordingly dispatched to St. David, soliciting his attendance at the synod, for the purpose of assisting the church in this hour of difficulty. Two successive invitations, however, proved entirely unavailing: "the holy man," to adopt the words of Giraldus, "was so devoted to religious contemplation, as to take little or no concern in mere temporal matters, unless compelled by the most urgent necessity." In order, therefore, to impress on his mind the existence of such a necessity in the present case, Dubricius himself, accompanied by Deiniol, Bishop of Bangor, repaired to the residence of the pious recluse, and, at length, succeeded in gaining him over to their cause; and he accompanied them in their return to the synod.

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the ancient tradition concerning Hu Gadarn and his oxen, as recorded in the Triads. What makes this probable is, that a large horn was formerly shewn in this parish as a relic, under the pretence that it had belonged to one of Hu's oxen. See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 127, for a translation of the Triad above alluded to, accompanied by some illustrative observations.

"The fame of the saint," says Leland on this occasion, "flew before him, and persons of the highest celebrity contended for the honour of offering him the first salutation." Such was the renown to which the habits of virtue and holiness, wherein the hours of St. David were spent, even in the privacy of his native valley, had raised him in popular estimation. Nor was the public hope disappointed in this instance. St. David, in a strain of pious eloquence, confuted, by unanswerable arguments, the opinions of his adversaries; and "the heresy," as Giraldus informs us, "immediately vanished, being utterly dissipated and destroyed." The enthusiastic acclamations of the assembly followed this signal triumph, and Dubricius himself, as if suddenly convinced of the superior worthiness of the Menevian recluse, insisted upon transferring to him the Primacy of the Welsh Church. St. David, however, withstood, with becoming modesty, this unexpected honour, urging his inexperience, and general incapacity for so weighty a charge. Nor was it until the liberal proposal of Dubricius was, in a manner, forced upon him by the universal voice, that he reluctantly consented to accept of the high reward. The disinterested conduct of Dubricius on this occasion should not pass without notice. Upon the resignation of his see, he is recorded to have retired to the Isle of Enlli, or Bardsey, where, in the exercises of religious devotion, the remainder of his days was consumed*.

* The following Welsh lines, ascribed by some, though with no great probability, to Aneurin, have an allusion to the retirement of Dubricius and others to Bardsey upon this occasion:

Pan oedd saint senedd Vrevi
Drwy arch y prophwydi,
Ar ol gwiw bregeth Dewi,
Yn myned i Ynys Enlli.

When

St. David, thus elevated to the metropolitan see*, discharged its important duties in so exemplary manner, that, according to one of his biographers, " even envy itself could find nothing to blame." But his stay at Caerlleon does not appear to have been of long duration; for desirous, perhaps, of a more retired situation, or still retaining his predilection for the place of his birth, he procured permission from Arthur, at that time sovereign of the Britons, to remove the archiepiscopal residence to the present St. David's. Here, for a long period, he enjoyed that tranquillity,—that *optatam quietem*,—which seems to have been the favourite object of his life; and his time, we may presume, was dedicated to study and contemplation, though not without a proper attention to his high pastoral duties. At length, however, his peace was again disturbed: the demons of dissension had excited into a fresh blaze the buried embers of heresy†, and St. David had once more to encounter the misguided disciples of Pelagius.

With this view he summoned, probably at St. David's, another ecclesiastical council, at which he again overthrew the doctrines of his opponents, and that too in so signal a manner, that this second assembly has been dignified with the title of the Synod of Victory. The decrees of the

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When the holy synod of Brevi,
At the instigation of the prophets,
After the excellent preaching of David,
Were going to the Isle of Enlli.

* We have the authority of the Historical Triads for placing St. David in this high rank. He is there recorded as Primate of the Welsh Church, under the sovereignty of Arthur, while Bedwini and Cyndeyrn exercised similar functions in Cornwall and Scotland.

† These are the words of Giraldus, who says, " cum cacodæmones aliquot sepultos Pelagiani erroris cineres refocillarent."

former council were confirmed on the present occasion; and the proceedings of both assemblies, which were afterwards sanctioned by the See of Rome, formed a code of ordinances for the future guidance of the Welsh church. St. David himself, according to Giraldus, wrote the decrees of the last synod, which, with several other similar records, became a prey to the flames during those piratical incursions, to which St. David's was formerly exposed. Thus was Pelagianism finally extirpated from the British church; and to St. David must be ascribed the honour of having, at length, overcome this obstinate heresy.

The remaining time, during which St. David enjoyed the Primacy of Wales, was, we may presume, devoted to the cares of his see, and the cultivation of genuine Christianity. Agreeably with this supposition, we find that he founded several churches and other religious institutions in South Wales, besides the Bishopric of St. David's*, and that he displayed, in his life and actions, a bright example of the duties that belong to a Christian pastor. But he is said, for some time previous to his death, to have resigned his high office, become perhaps, at length, from his great

* He is said to have founded nineteen churches in South Wales: viz. three in Brecknockshire, two in Cardiganshire, two in Carmarthenshire, one in Glamorganshire, three in Monmouthshire, four in Pembrokeshire, and four in the county of Radnor; in addition to which, many others have been dedicated to him in later times. The Bishopric of St. Davids, now a suffragan itself, anciently reckoned seven, or, according to Giraldus, twelve suffragans within its metropolitan pale. The seven alluded to were Worcester, Hereford, St. Asaph, Bangor, Llandav, Llanbadarn, and Margam. Among the ecclesiastical foundations, ascribed to St. David, is numbered, by some writers, St. Mary's of Glastonbury; but the reputed date of the event, A. D. 566, seems to deprive the statement of all pretensions to authenticity. However Usher has adopted it, as well indeed as many other notices relating to Wales, for which there is no good authority.

age, more burdensome than he could well sustain, and again to have sought the retirement he had before, with reluctance, abandoned. Whatever credit may be due to this assertion, it appears certain, from the concurrent testimony of his biographers, that his last days were spent at St. David's, where he died about the year 544, after having attained a very advanced age*. There too his remains were deposited; and his shrine continued, for centuries, the object of such particular veneration, that two pilgrimages to it were, in the days of papal darkness, held to be of equal efficacy with one to Rome†.

Such is the brief memoir, which history supplies of the Cambrian saint. To have multiplied the incidents of his life would, indeed, have been no difficult task, if we had been disposed to follow the guidance of his legendary biographers. For St. David, like Arthur, has been invested with all the extravagance of romantic decoration; and the inventive credulity of superstition has not been wanting to the completion of his imaginary renown. According to the popular legends, he had not merely the power of working miracles from the moment of his birth; but the same

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* The apocryphal writers make him one hundred and forty-seven years when he died; "therein agreeing," as they say, "with the age of the Patriarch Jacob." The more probable accounts represent him to have been between eighty and ninety.

† Accordingly, we have the following monkish verses in allusion to this subject:—

Roma dabit quantum, dat bis Menevia tantum—

and again,

Meneviam si bis, et Romam si semel ibis,
Merces æqua tibi redditur hic et ibi.

Davydd ab Gwilym, a poet of the 14th century, made a pilgrimage to St. David's, of which he has left an interesting account.

preternatural faculty even belonged to him while in his mother's womb. And, as if to give him an hereditary title to this divine attribute, his genealogy has, with a puerile profaneness, been traced to the Holy Virgin herself*. But there are, on the other hand, incidents ascribed to St. David, which, although not strictly beyond the verge of probability, do not appear sufficiently supported, to be incorporated with a memoir, that aims only at retaining what is authentic. Such, for example, are his reputed pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem, which some highly respectable authors have, however, received as historical memorials of the Menevian saint†. But, as they want the sanction of the early Welsh records, and are, besides, at variance with other parts of his life, as well as with the habits and opportunities of the times, their admission into this narrative has not been deemed warrantable.

The biographers of St. David, and, above all, Giraldus, whose testimony, however, is far from being, in all instances, unimpeachable, speak of him in terms of high encomium. And, as they ascribe to him virtues, which are strictly in unison with the reputed tenour of his life, it requires no extraordinary powers of faith to give assent to the por-

* Among the popular legends, here alluded to, the pretended life of St. David, in Welsh, in the Cotton MSS. (D. XXII.) is the most remarkable for its spurious embellishments. Of the numerous miracles, which it imputes to the saint, two of them precede his birth. It also deduces his pedigree, as above noticed, from the Virgin Mary, of whom it makes him the eighteenth lineal descendant. His death is there stated to have taken place on the 1st of March, when "Jesus Christ took to him the soul of St. David." The title of this MS., to which much more value has been attached than obviously belongs to it, is as follows: "Llyma y treithir o ach Dewi ac o dalym o'i vuched." It is handsomely illuminated, and seems to have been the work of the middle ages.

† Among these may be enumerated Leland, and the intelligent author of "*Horæ Britannicæ*."

trait they draw. According to this, and, in the words of Giraldus, St. David was "a mirror and pattern to all, instructing both by word and example, excellent in his preaching, but still more so in his works. He was a doctrine to all, a guide to the religious, a life to the poor, a support to orphans, a protection to widows, a father to the fatherless, a rule to monks, and a model to teachers; becoming all to all, that so he might gain all to God." To this his moral character he added a high reputation for theological learning; and two productions, a Book of Homilies and a Treatise against the Pelagians, have been ascribed to him. Nor, in the tribute paid to his memory, have his external accomplishments been forgotten: he is described as of a fair complexion, and of a noble stature*, and as having united with these personal advantages a gentle deportment and an amiable disposition.

But, however eminent the natural or acquired qualities of St. David may have been, however exemplary his piety, or however strict his life, it is his valuable services to the British church, and, through that, to the cause of Christianity itself, that entitles him to the rank he holds in the biographical annals of Wales†. As the founder of so many Christian establishments, and as the triumphant opponent

* Bale says, his height was four cubits.

† He is numbered in the Triads, with Teilo and Catwg, as one of the "three canonized saints of Britain." But it has already been intimated, that the pre-eminence, assigned to him as Patron Saint of Wales, is of foreign origin. St. David, indeed, appears to have had more superstitious honours paid to him in England than in his native country. Thus, in the days of Papacy, the following collect was read in the old church of Sarum on the 1st of March:—"O God, who by thy angel didst foretel thy blessed Confessor, St. David, thirty years before he was born, grant unto us, we beseech thee, that, celebrating his memory, we may, by his intercession, attain to joys everlasting."

of the Pelagian heresy, he may fairly be regarded as the pillar of the church during that unsettled age. Surrounded as he was by many zealous champions of our holy faith, he still appears to have soared above them with a superior dignity; and the ecclesiastical history of his country owes to him a splendour at once pure and imperishable.

ASSER MENEVENSIS.

Among the luminaries of an obscure age the individual, whose name is prefixed to this memoir, is particularly deserving of notice. Not, indeed, that his fame has any remarkable connexion with the history or literature of Wales, but, as he was both by birth and education a Welshman, he has acquired a sufficient claim to be enrolled among the eminent characters of the Principality.

Asser or Aser, as the name has been variously written, was a native of the county of Pembroke in South Wales, and of a place, which is still supposed to have derived from him the name of Trev Asser, or Asser's Town. Of the precise time of his birth, however, there is no account; but, from his presumed age, when invited by Alfred, it may be inferred, that he first saw the light about the middle of the ninth century. Time has left us no memorials of the juvenile years or early studies of this distinguished ornament of his country; but his education, wherever commenced, was completed in the monastery of St. David's, where he assumed the cowl of the Benedictine order, and from which place he derived his epithet of Menevensis*. St. David's was, at the time under consideration, the chief seat of learning in Wales, if not indeed in the whole island; for it does not appear to have had any rivals, in this respect, among other cotemporary institutions. Asser is recorded to have prosecuted his studies there

* Taken from Menevia, the Latin name by which St. David's was formerly known, and which was adopted from the Welsh Mynyw, as noticed in the preceding memoir.

under the direction of that celebrated scholar, Johannes Patricius, better known, perhaps, by the name of Erigena, while he also enjoyed the occasional assistance, as well as the general patronage, of his own kinsman and, as some report, his namesake*, who then presided over the see and monastery of St. David's. Under these auspicious circumstances his talents soon burst forth in all their natural luxuriance; and the rumour of his attainments speedily circulated throughout the country, extending even far beyond the confines of Wales.

His fame at length reached the ears of the illustrious Alfred; and by so celebrated a patron of genius and learning it could not be heard with indifference. Accordingly, about the year 880, that prince dispatched messengers to St. David's, with a special invitation to Asser to accompany them in their return to the Saxon court. Asser, it appears, lost no time in obeying this summons, and, after a long and laborious journey†, reached Dean in Wiltshire, at that time

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* Leland calls him "Asserius Menevensis, Archbishop of St. David's"; and, if he be right, it may be the same person, to whom Caradog, the historian of Wales, alludes, when he informs us, that "Asser the Wise, Archbishop of the Britons, died A. D. 906." For it does not seem probable, that this could apply to the Asser, who is the subject of this memoir. It deserves to be remarked, however, that the ancient Welsh records contain no other notices of the elder Asser. Some indeed give the name of Nobis or Noris to this kinsman of Asser; but, according to Usher, this has arisen from the misreading of a passage in Asser's Life of Alfred, in which the Latin pronoun *nobis* is transformed into a proper name. If that be the case, Asser makes use of no name, but merely says, "archiepiscopum propinquum meum." The Welsh histories, it may be added, have no such name as Nobis. Nonis and Nanis, indeed, are given by Giraldus and Godwin respectively, in their catalogues of the Bishops of St. David's; but these may be only different versions of the original error, above alluded to.

† The manner, in which Asser speaks of this journey, affords a proof, if any were wanting, of the little intercourse that existed between the diffe-

the residence of the English monarch, by whom he was received with every mark of the liveliest welcome. The joy, thus evinced on the part of Alfred, soon ripened into the most sincere friendship, and he urged his favourite in the strongest terms, and by a promise of high rewards, to quit St. David's, and establish his abode in future at the Saxon court. This proposal, however alluring, Asser felt it proper respectfully but resolutely to decline, honourably avowing his attachment to the place of his education, as well as to the religious duties he had there to discharge, and which, he thought, he ought not to abandon for any foreign preferment. After much farther persuasion, however, the king procured from him a promise, that he would divide the year equally between the English court and St. David's, provided he could obtain the consent of his brother ecclesiastics at the latter place to this arrangement. With the view of consulting them on this point, Asser received the king's permission to revisit his native country, upon undertaking to return to the court at an appointed period. He, accordingly, set out for St. David's, but had the misfortune, when arrived at Winchester, to be seized with a malignant fever, under which, to use his own words, "he languished for twelve months and a week, suffering severely night and day, without any hope of surviving." In the mean time, the day stipulated for Asser's return having passed, Alfred became naturally impatient, and wrote to inquire the cause of his delay. The messenger, having found him at Winchester, returned with an answer from

rent parts of the island in that age. "His temporibus," says our author in the Life of Alfred, "ego quoque, rege advocatus, de occiduis et ultimæ Britanniæ finibus ad Saxoniam adveni." It appears, too, when he speaks of journeying, on this occasion, "per multa terrarum spatia," that the means of travelling were not quite so expeditious as in the present day.

Asser, who, soon after recovering, pursued his journey to St. David's.

The result of the conference, which he had with his friends upon reaching the place of his destination, was decidedly favourable to his compliance with the wishes of Alfred; for the religious fraternity of St. David's were in hopes, by such means, of gaining a powerful protector against one of the chieftains of South Wales, by whom they had been for some time oppressed*. They accordingly foresaw, in imagination at least, considerable advantage in this connexion between their renowned countryman and the English monarch; but, unwilling to surrender the society of the former for so long a period as six months at a time, they engaged him to stipulate for a quarterly residence only at each place; and, with this modification of the original proposal, Asser returned to his royal patron.

The manner in which, on this occasion, he was greeted by Alfred, must have been peculiarly gratifying to his feelings, if not also flattering to his pride. He found the king at Leonford, and was received by him with every indication of the most generous attachment; and so much did he grow in favour with his royal Mæcenas, that he never quitted him during the next eight months, thus soon forgetting or disregarding the stipulation, which his col-

* Asser gives the name of Hemeid to this chieftain, whom he dignifies with the title of king. The only name, however, of any note during this period of Welsh history, that at all resembles Hemeid, is Euneth or Eunydd, the son of Bledryd, a baron of South Wales, who, according to H. Llwyd, died about A. D. 895; but there is no other notice of him. Anarawd, indeed, son of Roderic the Great, laid waste a great part of South Wales about the same period; but there seems no affinity between the names. The difficulty, however, is hardly worth solving; but it may be proper here to notice, that almost all the Welsh names in the writings of Asser have suffered miserably from the carelessness or ignorance of transcribers.

leagues at St. David's had instructed him to make. The time, that Alfred and his favourite thus spent together, was devoted to the pursuits of literature and science; and the prince appears to have regarded Asser in the light of an experienced tutor, while he, on the other hand, imparted to his august pupil the full benefit of his talents and information. It cannot be doubted, that the advantages, which Alfred derived from these social lucubrations, must have been peculiarly great, especially when we consider the congeniality of disposition and genius, that existed between him and his preceptor. Nor was the monarch slow in evincing his gratitude for these important services, since we find, that on Christmas eve, succeeding Asser's return, probably in the year 882, he bestowed upon him the monasteries of Ambresbury in Wiltshire, and Banwell in Somersetshire. This preferment was accompanied by the donation of a silk pall of great value, and as much incense as a man could carry, with which the king sent a note to his friend, intimating, "that these were but small things, and by way of earnest of greater that should follow them."

Not long after this, Asser was promoted, in rapid succession, to the bishoprics of Exeter and Sherbourne*; and he is said to have been subsequently translated to a still higher dignity, the name of which, however, his biographers have not preserved. Yet, whether this was the fact or not, he retained until his death the title of Bishop of Sherbourne. From the period of his elevation to this see his whole time appears to have been spent at the court of his royal bene-

* Upon the occasion of this preferment Leland bursts out into the following enthusiastic exclamation. "O fortunatum juxta et eordatum principem, qui potuit et voluit hujusmodi sortis hominem evangelico opere præficere! O fortunatiorem pontificem, cui contigit sub tam pio principe sancto fungi officio!"

factor: at least we have no account of any portion of it having been dedicated to the place of his education, agreeably with the terms originally proposed. His episcopal functions, and the partiality of his prince, served, perhaps, in time, to disunite, though not absolutely to estrange, him from his native land. It was, probably, during this period of his life that he assisted Alfred in the compilation of that famous body of laws, which has ever since formed the grand pedestal of this monarch's fame. And there are reasons for believing that Asser rendered, on this occasion, the most important services, by a communication of the ancient laws of Wales, especially those of the celebrated British legislator, Dyvnwal Moelmud, commonly called by English writers Moelmutius*. A Latin copy of these, presented by him to Alfred, is said to have been translated by that prince into the Saxon tongue†; and, from the strong

* This ancient legislator is thought to have lived about three centuries before the Christian era, and is recorded in the Chronicles as the twenty-first king of Britain. He is said to have been the first to divide the kingdom into commotes or hundreds, for which he is commemorated in the Historical Triads as one of the "three system-formers of Britain." Other notices respecting him occur in the same ancient records, and he is particularly celebrated for having first reduced to a system the laws and privileges of the Cymry. This code was extant in the time of Gildas, who translated it into Latin; and it was, most probably, this translation that was presented, as above mentioned, by Asser to King Alfred. The same code was afterwards of considerable service to Hywel Dda, when arranging the Laws of Wales. Some Institutional and Law Triads, ascribed to Moelmud, are still extant, and are to be found in the Welsh Archaiology. An English version of a part of these has recently been published by the *Cymmrodorion*, or Cambrian Institution, in the first volume of their "Transactions."

† Dr. Powell in his notes on H. Llwyd's "Historie of Cambria," says, that Alfred "translated the ancient laws of Dyvnwal Moelmud, king of Britain, and the laws of Marsia, queen of Britain, wife of Cyhelyn, out of British into English."

analogy occasionally to be traced between the English common law and the Welsh ordinances, there can be scarcely a doubt, that, in the foundation of the former, the latter were, in no small degree, instrumental. Nor will this be a matter of surprise, when it is known that, while the Saxons were, with respect to literary and political knowledge, in the most abject darkness, the Britons had advanced to a state of comparative civilization. At least, there are several literary remains of great antiquity in the Welsh tongue, which indicate, in the people to whom they belonged, no mean proficiency in the science of jurisprudence.

Nor was it in the arts of government only that Asser is supposed to have transferred to his adopted country the benefits which his native soil had to bestow. It is asserted by several writers, and the assertion rests on very plausible grounds, that, at his suggestion, Alfred founded, or considerably improved, the University of Oxford. And it is reasonable to suppose, that Asser, on this occasion, availed himself of his experience in the laws and discipline of similar institutions in Wales, where, before the time of Alfred, as already incidentally noticed, learning had counted her proudest temples and her most zealous votaries. The subject of this biographical sketch deserves, then, to be commemorated, not more for the important services he was thus instrumental in rendering to England, than for the honour which those services reflect on the land of his birth.

To the more private studies of Alfred we have already seen that the talents of Asser proved of the most essential advantage; and in his life of that prince he has detailed some interesting anecdotes of the manner in which they spent their hours of literary retirement. Among these we learn, that Asser was in the frequent habit of citing re-

markable passages from the most eminent writers, and that a quotation, which he made upon one occasion, so gratified the prince, that he requested to have it committed to paper. Asser, improving this hint, suggested the use of a common-place book, or album, in which all similar passages might be entered. The suggestion was immediately adopted, and became the foundation of an extensive collection, still extant, which Alfred calls his " hand-book or manual," and to which Asser has given the title of " Enchiridion." In the same unconstrained and confidential manner did the prince and his instructor prosecute their studies, forgetting their disparity of rank in those affinities of talent and mind, which are ever the strongest cement of friendship. In addition to the general aid thus imparted by Asser to his illustrious patron, it is probable that he assisted him in most of the works which Alfred has bequeathed to posterity. In one of these, a Translation of Gregory's Pastoral Letter, the royal author, in his Prefatory Epistle, expressly acknowledges the assistance he had received from Asser, whom he styles, with a familiar partiality, " his bishop," instead of using, as in the case of other individuals, the titular designation. In similar terms of attachment Alfred also speaks of him in his will, which proves the distinguished confidence with which Asser was honoured.

There are grounds for supposing, that the subject of this memoir remained at the English court during the whole reign of Alfred, and even for some years afterwards; but of the decline of his life we have no certain account. His death is positively fixed by the Saxon Chronicle in the year 910, while, according to other authorities, it happened a year earlier; but the place, in which he breathed his last, has been left unrecorded. Nor has it been permitted to posterity to pay at his tomb the tribute due to his memory.

No trace survives, whereby his last earthly tenement is now to be known.

It has been a subject of controversy with some writers, whether Asser, Bishop of Sherbourne, and Asser the Monk, are to be regarded as one individual. Without presuming to decide this point, we may be allowed to suggest, that the same person may, very possibly, have enjoyed, at different periods, both designations, as indeed seems to have been actually the case in the instance before us. That Asser was Bishop of Sherbourne is generally admitted; and that he had been previously initiated as a monk at St. David's is no less certainly known. But this question may safely be left in its assumed ambiguity, without any detriment to the acknowledged fame of the individual, whose life is here briefly recorded.

Another point, upon which authors have differed, is the number of works to be ascribed to Asser. Some have enumerated six as still extant, as well as many others no longer in being. The six alluded to are,—1. The Annals of Alfred's Life and Reign*; 2. The Annals of Britain; 3. The Enchiridion, already mentioned, entitled, *Enchiridion Aurearum Sententiarum*; 4. A Commentary on Boethius; 5. A Collection of Homilies; and 6. A Collection of Epistles. Of these, the first three alone appear to have Asser for their author; the first, at least, has never been disputed, and the other two bear internal marks of their genuineness. The fourth seems to have reference merely to some illustrations of the Treatise of Boethius on the Consolation of Philo-

* This work, the only one, perhaps, that may, without dispute, be assigned to Asser, was first published by Abp. Parker at the conclusion of the "Walsinghame History" in 1574. It was afterwards reprinted by Camden in his "Anglica, Normanica, &c." in 1603, and, lastly, by Mr. Vise, at Oxford, in 1722.

sophy, which were communicated to Alfred while he was translating that work into Saxon*. The existence likewise of the last two works above mentioned, seems to be unsupported by any credible testimony.

It remains now to notice the hypothesis of an eminent Welsh scholar†, that Asser Menevensis is to be identified with an ancient writer of the name of Geraint, the reputed author of the first Grammar of the Welsh tongue, as well as of some moral and didactic productions in the same language still extant‡. This writer, according to the ancient custom of Wales, bore the assumed appellation of the Blue Bard, from which it may be inferred, that he united a talent for poetry with the qualifications already implied. It is true that Geraint, like Asser, was a native of Wales, and that he lived during the ninth century; and, like him too, he may have received his education at the monastery of St. David's. But the ground, upon which the assumption of their identity has been mainly erected, is the supposition that Asser, or rather Aser, was, according to the barbarous latinity of that age, but another name for azure or blue; and that it was, therefore, adopted, for the purpose of retaining the bardic appellation above specified. There is certainly nothing very extravagant in this conjecture, and it has the advantage of being supported by examples of a si-

* Leland, indeed, seems positively to state, on the authority of the Chronicle of St. Neots, that Asser was the author of such a "Commentary."—"Interpretatus est librum Boetii de Consolatione Philosophiæ, aut, ut verius loquar, lucidis commentariolis illustravit," are the words of Leland. However, as no work of this kind is now extant, the conclusion in the text seems the most probable.

† Mr. Owen (now Dr. Owen Pughe) in his "Cambrian Biography."

‡ These are to be found in the third volume of the Welsh Archaiology.

milar practice*. Nor is it, moreover, unreasonable to presume, that Asser had devoted much of his early years to the cultivation of his native tongue, as well, perhaps, as of his national muse. And, were it capable of being ascertained, that we owe to him what have descended to us under the name of Geraint, an additional motive would be supplied for venerating his fame, and for enrolling him among the literary ornaments of the Principality. But it must still be admitted, that the probability of this rests on no very stable foundation. However pleasing the hypothesis, it is the duty of the historian to state, that it merits no higher character.

Enough, however, remains, in the acknowledged notices of Asser, to entitle his memory to our respect, and to confer on him the reputation of being one of the brightest stars of the clouded hemisphere, in which it was his fate to shine. He had, evidently, amassed a considerable fund of such learning as the times could supply; and it was his peculiar felicity to be placed in a station, in which his acquirements became productive of honour to himself and of signal advantage to others. Enjoying, in an eminent degree, the friendship of a liberal and enlightened prince, he availed himself of the rare opportunity, to render his talents instrumental in the promotion of good government, and in the extension of literary knowledge. Animated by the example of his illustrious patron, who at once rewarded and rivalled his genius, he gave a practical proof of the benefits that result to a state, where the prince is himself a votary of

* Upon this principle Lleuver, Morgan, and Bleiddan, celebrated ecclesiastics of the second, fourth, and fifth centuries, assumed the names of Lucius, Pelagius, and Lupus, which are but Latin versions of their original appellations.

learning, and can appreciate its value in others*. To these his general attainments and talents Asser must have added a comprehensive acquaintance with the literature of his native country, or at least with its more important branches. We have seen this knowledge evinced in the services which he rendered to his royal benefactor, upon the erection of that fabric of jurisprudence, which has exalted the name of Alfred among those of the most eminent legislators. And, whether Asser be regarded as a humble participator in this splendid work, or as the peculiar friend of literature by the encouragement of its infant establishments, or, finally, with reference to his general fame, Wales has ample reason to rejoice in his well-earned celebrity.

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* Leland, while contemplating the literary union that existed between these distinguished individuals, exclaims—"Næ ille igitur rectè sapiebat, qui scripsit 'felicem rempublicam fore, ubi princeps doctus esset, aut doctrinæ solidè faveat'."

HYWEL DDA.

Of all the benefits enjoyed by a nation, those, which it receives from a wise and provident lawgiver, are at once the most important and the most permanent. Other acquisitions may indeed be more brilliant, but none can be more salutary. The triumphs of arms or the accession of territory may bestow glory or power; but it is left to the silent work of legislation to communicate to a state those imperishable attributes, that "grow with its growth and strengthen with its strength," that constitute, as it were, its vital essence, and are only to be destroyed when the nation itself has ceased to exist. The fame of the conqueror is often swept from our view like the blaze in which it was nurtured; but the wise prince, that studies by wholesome laws to promote the welfare of his people, identifies his renown with that of his country, and builds on her prosperity a deathless name. Hence Lycurgus and Solon, among the ancient Greeks, and Justinian and Alfred, in more modern nations and times, are deservedly numbered among the benefactors of their race; and to their memory belongs a lustre proportionate with the benefits they conferred on their fellow men.

Nor ought the insignificance of the particular nation concerned to detract any thing from the justice of the preceding remarks, as though, in a small state, there were no opportunity for the exemplification of great virtues. Had this been true, the world would never have heard of the celebrated lawgiver of Sparta. But it will be obvious to the liberal inquirer, that, however inconsiderable the people, the fame of their rulers is not necessarily contracted within the limited circle to which it owes its existence. Superior

endowments and pre-eminent virtues, to whatever space their operation may have been confined, become in time the inheritance of the world; and he, who by the wisdom of his legislation may have secured the happiness of a small community, would, no doubt, have diffused similar benefits through any wider sphere in which his lot might have been cast.

Under such circumstances lived the individual, who forms the subject of the present brief memoir; for brief it must be, since time has left but few traces of his quiet and unambitious career. Though destined to fill a humble throne, he possessed qualities that might have graced the most illustrious. But the candid reader will know how to appreciate the character of a patriot prince, even though his dominions extended not beyond the mountain barriers of Wales.

Hywel Dda, or Howell the Good,—for such is the honourable title his countrymen have conferred on him,—was born about the close of the ninth century. His father was Cadell, eldest son of Rhodri, surnamed the Great, and to whom that prince had, on his death, allotted the province of Dinevwr in South Wales, bestowing, at the same time, on his two other sons, Anarawd and Mervyn, the provinces of Aberfraw and Powys, constituting, with Dinevwr, the three portions into which Rhodri had rather injudiciously divided the Principality*. Upon the death of Cadell, in the

* It is only meant here that Rhodri, or Roderic, was the first to disunite these constituent portions of Wales, and thus to weaken the general power of the country by the civil broils to which this disunion subsequently gave rise. But, in reality, Wales had long before possessed three distinct territories, corresponding generally with the divisions adopted by Rhodri. Although the Welsh histories give us the names of Dinevwr, Aberfraw, and Powys, the more proper designations for the two former would be Deheu-

year 907, Hywel succeeded to his patrimonial territory in South Wales, as well as to Powys in North Wales, of which his father had, in 877, dispossessed his own brother Mervyn.

Six years after Hywel had become possessed of his hereditary dominions, his uncle Anarawd, prince of Aberfraw, died, and Hywel, according to some authorities, succeeded on this occasion to the nominal sovereignty of all Wales, assuming, at the same time, the guardianship of his cousins, the sons of Anarawd*. However, be this as it may, it was not until twenty-seven years afterwards that, upon the death of Idwal Voel, he actually enjoyed the full dominion of the Principality.

But Hywel did not wait for this event to carry into execution the plans which he had meditated for the benefit of his country. When he had succeeded to his patrimonial possessions, he had soon an opportunity of witnessing the numerous abuses, which were prevalent in Wales owing to the diversity and uncertainty of the existing laws. And no sooner had he made this discovery, than he resolved upon using his best exertions towards providing a remedy for the evil. Accordingly, as a preliminary step towards this patriotic design, he set out for Rome, as we learn from the historian Caradog, in the year 926, accompanied by three

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barth, and Gwynedd, which embraced, with some exceptions, the modern South and North Wales, while Powys comprised all the land between the Wye and the Severn, and, consequently, extended considerably beyond the present limits of the Principality. According to the Historical Triads, the eldest of the three princes, in possession of these several portions of Wales, was to exercise a paramount dominion over the other two.—See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. ii. p. 438.

* It was, most probably, for the reason mentioned at the conclusion of the last note, that Hywel thus assumed the titular supremacy over his nephews. Anarawd left two sons, Idwal Voel and Elis, the former of whom succeeded to the sovereignty of Gwynedd.

Welsh bishops*, for the purpose of obtaining such information as might aid his views, and especially with a desire of ascertaining the particular laws that were in force in Britain, while it was under the sway of the Roman emperors.

To whatever extent Hywel may have succeeded in the object of this journey—one at that period of no ordinary magnitude—it appears certain that he made little or no use of the imperial code in that, which he subsequently compiled for the government of his subjects. He had, no doubt, the discrimination to perceive, that the Roman laws had been framed for a people of habits essentially different from those of his own countrymen at the period in question. More than four centuries had weaned the Britons alike from the empire and customs of Rome; and thus, left again to themselves, they had resumed their ancient laws and institutions, subject only to those changes and disorders, which the alteration of times, and the prevalence of intestine divisions, were so well calculated to introduce.

Upon Hywel's return from Rome, he seems to have lost no time in prosecuting still farther the important design he had undertaken. With this view, he immediately summoned a national convention or council†, at the White House on the Tav, the same that, under the name of Whitland Abbey, had been before celebrated as the place at which St. David received his education, and of which some ruins are still to be seen. This council was composed of

* These were—Martin, bishop of Mynyw or St. David's, Mordav, bishop of Bangor, and Marchlwys, bishop of Llandav; and they had with them, as Caradog relates, the learned Blegwryd, afterwards noticed in the course of this memoir.

† The Welsh historians generally date this event after Hywel's succession to the full sovereignty of the Principality; but we prefer following the authority of Caradog, who appropriates it to the period here specified, when Hywel was lord paramount only, not sovereign, of all Wales.

six of the wisest and most discreet men out of every commote* in Wales, and of one hundred and forty ecclesiastics of various degrees, together with all the chiefs of tribes, and other persons of noble rank in the Principality; thus constituting an assembly not very dissimilar, in its formation, from that which has since become the glory of the whole island under the name of the Parliament. It was at the beginning of Lent that Hywel convoked this council, and, actuated as well perhaps by a consideration of the particular period as by the magnitude of the object he had in view, he remained with the whole assembly in prayer and fasting throughout the holy season, "craving," according to one of the Welsh historians†, "the assistance and direction of God's holy spirit, that he might reform the laws and customs of the country of Wales, to the honour of God and the quiet government of the people." Whatever our less rigid notions of piety may teach us in these times to think of this ceremony, it must be allowed to have been in conformity with the manners of that age, and not wholly at variance with the interesting importance of the occasion.

When, at the end of Lent, these preliminary solemnities were brought to a close, Hywel gave directions, that twelve of the most experienced individuals should be set apart from the number present, in order that, with the assistance of Blegwryd, chancellor of Llandav, and the most distinguished scholar and lawyer of that age, they should proceed to a revision of the ancient laws of Wales, so that such only might be retained as were conducive to good government, and applicable to the particular character of the times. Blegwryd and his associates entered immediately

* A commote, in Welsh *cwmmwd*, comprised, according to the laws of Hywel, twelve manors and two hamlets.

† Dr. Powell, in his additions to H. Llwyd's "Historie of Cambria."

on the task, and, after a careful and laborious research, concurred, according to the testimony of Caradog, in selecting the laws of Dyvnwal Moelmud as the foundation of the new code*. These were accordingly reduced to a systematic form, and, with appropriate illustrations, submitted to the judgment of the national convention, by whom they were finally adopted with such additions and alterations as the changes of manners and circumstances had made necessary.

When this was done, the new laws received the sanction of Hywel, who, in order that the occasion might not want its full measure of ceremonial solemnity, directed, that "the malediction of God, of that assembly, and of all Wales, should be invoked against all such as should violate them, as well as against those, by whom they might be corruptly administered†." Thus were these famous institutes established by the national vote, with the consent of the sovereign, according to the ancient usage of Wales‡.

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* See p. 91, *supra*, in the notes, for some account of Dyvnwal and the laws that have been ascribed to him.

† These are the words of the preamble, which introduces the laws of Hywel; and it appears from other sources, that sentence of excommunication against all offenders was, on this occasion, pronounced by the Bishop of St. David's.

‡ According to some of the Law Triads, ascribed to Dyvnwal Moelmud, the constitutional assembly of the ancient Britons or Cymry, at which the legislative proceedings and other important affairs of the nation were transacted, was composed of the sovereign, rulers, chiefs of clans, and men of wisdom throughout the country. To this assembly belonged, as already intimated, the power of making and repealing laws, of forming treaties of alliance, and of regulating the succession to the throne. In a word, this convention possessed a paramount authority, to which all other courts and councils were amenable. A translation of the ancient Triads, relating to this curious subject, may be seen in the "Transactions of the Cymmrodorion," recently published, p. 104, &c.

But Hywel, notwithstanding the prudent precautions he had thus adopted in this legislative measure, seems still to have thought his work incomplete, as long as any thing remained to be done by which it might acquire an additional weight. With this view, he resolved upon a second journey to Rome, for the purpose of soliciting for his new code the countenance of the papal see. They, who are acquainted with the depravity of the Romish church, and more particularly of the court of Rome, at this period, may feel some surprise, that a man of Hywel's acknowledged sagacity should have stooped to the degradation of seeking any favour from so polluted a source. For, so corrupt in its doctrinal character, so benighted in ignorance, so lost in the practice of every species of iniquity was the church of Rome at the period in question, that it may be thought to have been a sort of infatuation which could have persuaded Hywel, that his laws would derive either force or credit from such a sanction*. Yet it must not, on the other

* The old ecclesiastical historians abound in allusions to the ignorance and degeneracy of the Romish church, at the beginning of the tenth century. Even to embody the substance of these would far exceed the bounds of a note: one or two detached extracts must therefore suffice. Phil. Burgomensis, speaking of the years 906 and 908, says, "it happened in that age, through the slothfulness of men, that there was a general decay of virtue both in the head and members. And these times," he adds, "through the ambition and cruel tyranny of the Popes, were extremely unhappy; for the Popes, setting aside the fear of God and his worship, fell into such enmities amongst themselves, as cruel tyrants exercise towards one another." Genebrard, also, in allusion to the same period, says, "this is called the unhappy age, being destitute of men eminent for wit and learning, as also of famous princes and popes. In this time there was scarcely any thing done worthy of being remembered by posterity." But the age, he afterwards adds, "was chiefly unhappy in this one thing, that, for almost a hundred and fifty years, about fifty Popes did utterly degenerate from the virtues of their ancestors."—*Chron.* l. 4. And Sigonius, speaking of the same

hand, be forgotten, that the Popes were about this time beginning to arrogate that dominion over the secular affairs of princes, which they had long usurped over their spiritual concerns; and the grovelling superstition, which, in after ages, bowed the necks of kings beneath the feet of pontifical tyranny*, was on the eve of creeping into a gloomy existence. In such a state of things, then, our wonder may at least be suspended, when we find Hywel yielding so far to the popular current, as to court for his new code this imaginary accession of authority and importance.

Accordingly, in the year 930, Hywel, accompanied by some of his most eminent ecclesiastics, repaired again to Rome, where his laws were recited before the Pope, and received his ratifying approbation. Thus apparently honoured, the Welsh lawgiver returned to his native land, and his new code was a second time submitted to a general congress of the nation, by whose unanimous assent it was finally proclaimed throughout Wales, and continued to be observed as the only law of the country until the extinction of its independence in the time of Edward the First. Hywel also ordered three copies to be written, that one might be deposited in each of the royal palaces of the Principality.

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age as it regarded Rome, calls it "the foulest and blackest both in respect of the wickedness of princes, and the madness of the people, that is to be found in all antiquity."—*De Reg. Ital.* l. 6. But even these passages, strong as they are, are exceeded by some in the works of Bellarmine and Baronius, whose testimony cannot be suspected, since they were, on other occasions, among the most strenuous advocates of the church of Rome. They speak, however, in the most unqualified terms of the dissolute and abominable practices of the papal court, and of the Romish clergy generally, during the commencement of the tenth century.

* The reader will not require to be reminded, that this was literally the case, or that other indignities, equally humiliating, were practised by the Popes towards those sovereigns, who were weak enough to become their vassals.

The great benefits thus conferred by Hywel on his native land, as well as the discreet and equitable government which he displayed while his dominion was confined to his paternal provinces of Dinevwr and Powys, so ingratiated him with his countrymen, that, upon the death of his cousin Idwal Voel in 940, he was unanimously elected to the sovereignty of the remaining province of Aberfraw or Gwynedd, whereby he reunited, under one sceptre, the whole Principality. And, as the sons of Idwal, many in number, were set aside to make room for Hywel on this occasion, it may fairly be concluded, that the virtues of the latter, which entitled him to such a distinction, were of no ordinary character. They were such, no doubt, as form the peculiar ornament of a prince, whose paramount object, in the exercise of his high functions, is the welfare and prosperity of his people.

But the views of Hywel were not exclusively directed to the business of legislation. He seems to have also laboured, with particular anxiety, to preserve the tranquillity of his country; and such was the success of his exertions, that scarcely once in a space of thirty-five years, during which he held a sovereign sway, was the peace of Wales disturbed by domestic discords or foreign invasion*. In an age and country, so much exposed to those troubles that are the natural result of conflicting interests and unsettled authority, it is surely no mean praise, that Hywel was

* This remark has reference, more particularly, to the general condition of the country during the reign of Hywel. For private feuds between particular chieftains were, as usual, unavoidable; yet these seem to have had little or no effect on the general repose of the Principality. The period of thirty-five years, abovementioned, begins from the death of Anarawd, after which event Hywel, either as lord paramount, or as actual sovereign, enjoyed the supreme authority over all Wales.

able so effectually to suspend, though he could not wholly subdue, their baneful operation. And the value of his exertions in this respect, as well as his personal ascendancy, will appear in a still stronger light, when we reflect, that his death was immediately followed by a renewal of all those civil broils and convulsions, by which, before his time, Wales had been so unhappily torn. His guardian genius no longer presided over her destinies, and the demon of dissension was once more triumphant. Hywel died in the year 948, deeply lamented and deservedly honoured by his subjects. He left four sons, all of whom are said to have perished in the desolating wars to which their country became now a prey.

On the character of the Welsh Justinian, as Hywel may justly be denominated, the foregoing details have made it unnecessary to expatiate at any great length. In addition to those patriotic qualities, which were more emphatically his own, he was of a pious and devout disposition, and did much towards promoting the cause of Christianity among his subjects. To say, then, that he was the wisest and most politic prince that ever governed the Principality, may be regarded as but a mean eulogy; for the intestine contentions, by which, as already noticed, the country was usually harassed, were but ill calculated to produce any rivals to the peculiar virtues of Hywel. And, accordingly, we find the history of Wales for several centuries presenting us rather with a train of warlike adventurers, or predatory chieftains, than with a succession of prudent and enlightened sovereigns, who devoted themselves to the great interests of the nation in preference to their own petty intrigues. In this respect, Howell the Good stands in solitary pre-eminence among the crowd of monarchs, with whom he is intermixed; and his character may be advanta-

geously compared with that of the most celebrated rulers of other countries, who have incorporated their renown with the noble institutions, of which they have been the founders.

Of all these, the English Alfred presents us with the readiest and most remarkable parallel. Nearly cotemporaries*, both monarchs were actuated by the same zealous desire to ensure the happiness and prosperity of their subjects, and that too by the same method, a wise and liberal legislation. Yet, however congenial their motives in this respect, the circumstances, under which they were displayed, were essentially different, and created a wide disparity in their actions and reputation. The English sovereign was exposed to all the disadvantages of a disturbed reign, during which he had to engage in many battles, and to repel many hostile incursions; and thus, however disposed to tranquillity, he became, almost in spite of himself, a warrior and a hero. The Welsh prince, on the other hand, had the good fortune to prevent, rather than to repress, any warlike commotions; and the general tenour of his reign was in happy unison with his own pacific designs. Alfred was doomed to prosecute his great national work through dissension and bloodshed: that of Hywel was achieved under the auspicious shade of peace. Nor were wars and tumults the only evils which Alfred had to encounter: he had also to contend against the prejudices of an ignorant and semi-barbarous people†. But Hywel's

* They were, in strictness of fact, actually cotemporaries, but not in their kingly character, with which alone we have here any concern. Alfred died in the year 901, six years before Hywel had succeeded to his patrimonial possessions.

† It was a common complaint with Alfred, that there was not a priest from the Humber to the Thames, who could understand the Liturgy in his mother tongue, or who could translate the easiest piece of Latin.

subjects, on the contrary, enjoyed a comparative civilisation, and he was assisted by many individuals of learning in the accomplishment of his politic undertaking. If the career of the one was, therefore, the more hazardous, and the more brilliant, that of the other was decidedly the more fortunate. But, not only in their virtues did these two sovereigns resemble each other; their public failings were also alike. They were both influenced by a superstitious reverence for the see of Rome, and both blindly courted its patronage and protection. In a word, whatever may now be thought of the relative merits of Alfred and Hywel, it should not be forgotten, that the renown of the former has been materially indebted to concomitant accidents. Like the "fame of Marcellus," it grew up in a dark and barbarous age*, and owed to the surrounding gloom its most prominent lustre. Hywel's reputation, on the other hand, has enjoyed none of those advantages that result from a strong contrast; and history, who has been so lavish of her favours to the great Saxon monarch, has scarcely woven one solitary wreath for the lawgiver of Wales. Yet, whether we regard the patriotism of Hywel's great design, or the success of its execution, we shall find ample reason to respect his pretensions to the comparison we have ventured to draw with his more favoured rival.

It may be proper, in conclusion, to say something of the general nature of the laws compiled by Hywel. Several MS. copies of them, of respectable antiquity, are still in existence; all of them, however varying in some of their details, agreeing in their general substance†. From these

* Crescit occulto velut arbor ævo
Fama Marcelli.—*Hor.*

† There is a valuable old copy of these laws among the Cotton MSS. in the British Museum, and also one in the Welsh school in Gray's Inn Lane:

it appears, that these ancient ordinances were originally divided into three parts: 1. The laws relating to the Royal Prerogative; 2. Those connected with the Civil Jurisprudence; and 3. The Criminal Law. Most of these, as may be imagined, contain provisions essentially different from any at present in force in this country; but, in some instances, and those too of importance, the sources of still existing laws and institutions are clearly to be traced. More particularly with the English Common Law is this affinity to be discovered; and we have already seen, that Alfred, in the formation of that famous code, borrowed largely from the old British institutes, which Hywel had adopted as the foundation of his. Notwithstanding, therefore, that the laws of Hywel have long ceased to possess their ancient authority, we may still be allowed to appreciate their value, as records of the manners and customs of a remote age, and, especially, as disclosing the origin of several modern usages, not otherwise to be explained. But, among the Cymry, it may be hoped, their national code will long retain a character of far deeper interest, in being regarded as a proud memorial of the most enlightened and virtuous prince, that ever adorned the season of their independence.

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there are likewise others in several libraries in Wales, most, if not all, of which, were consulted by Dr. Wotton, when, with the assistance of Mr. Moses Williams, he published, in 1730, an edition of these celebrated remains, with a Latin translation. A complete English version is still a desideratum.

RHYS AB TEWDWR.

The feuds and civil commotions, to which Wales became a prey after the death of Hywel Dda, continued to convulse the country for many subsequent ages; and, however unpropitious this stormy period to the display of the milder and more peaceful virtues, it was, by no means, deficient in instances of those qualities that give a lustre to the profession of arms. Among the individuals, who may be selected as exemplifying the justice of this remark, the subject of the present memoir holds a distinguished place. It was, indeed, late in his life before he had an opportunity of evincing the particular bent of his genius; but, however short the duration of his warlike career, it was one of considerable brilliance. And, in addition to his fame as a warrior, he also merits commemoration as the founder of one of the five royal tribes of the Principality.

Rhys ab Tewdwr*, Prince of Deheubarth or South Wales, was the fourth in lineal descent from the illustrious Hywel, whose life has been already detailed. His father Tewdwr, on whom the epithet, Great, was, for some unrecorded reason, bestowed, fell a victim, in the year 997, to the calamitous wars of the times, leaving his two infant sons, Rhys and Rhydderch, at the mercy of the same turbulent dissensions. How long Rhys, the elder of these orphans, remained in the land of his birth after his father's death, we are not informed; but it is certain, that at an early age,

* Rhys ab Tewdwr, according to the English orthography, would be Rice, the son of Theodore; but we have thought it most advisable, in this as in former instances, to adhere to the original names—a plan which will be pursued throughout the work.

he was forced by the troubles of the period, and particularly by the loss of his hereditary dominions, to seek an asylum among the Britons of Armorica, with whom the natives of Wales have ever claimed a kindred descent. In this state of exile he continued, in all probability, between fifty and sixty years*; but, during all this long interval, history has left no memorials of his actions or conduct.

It is not until the year 1077, that, upon the death of Rhys ab Owain, who had usurped the sovereignty of South Wales, we have any farther notice of the subject of this memoir. Upon this event, Rhys ab Tewdwr, who must have been now above eighty years of age, returned from Brittany, and put in his claim to the vacant throne, as legitimate heir. The manifest justice of his pretensions, aided by his own reputation for wisdom and integrity, prevented any open opposition, and, accordingly, with the general consent of his countrymen, he was fully invested with the power enjoyed by his ancestors. But, however favourable his own subjects may have been to this restoration of his patrimonial rights, the event was by no means so well received by Trahaiarn ab Caradog, who, at that time, illegally occupied the throne of North Wales. Trahaiarn, who had mainly contributed to the dethronement of Rhys ab Owain, had hoped, on that event, to succeed to his possessions; and the mortification, occasioned by this disappointment of his ambitious views, had the effect of exciting his resentment in a particular manner against the son of Tewdwr.

* Supposing him to have been about twenty years of age when he went to Brittany, he must have been absent above fifty years; for, according to Caradog, he did not return until after the death of Rhys ab Owain, which took place eighty years after that of his father, at which period, we presume, the subject of this memoir was a mere infant.

It was by usurpation, as just intimated, that Trahaiarn exercised the sovereign authority in North Wales or Gwynedd, which, of right, belonged to Gruffydd ab Cynan, the lineal descendant of Anarawd, on whom that portion of Wales had been bestowed by Roderic the Great. Gruffydd had made several efforts to establish himself in his hereditary dominions, but was, in all of them, foiled by the superior power of his rival. The establishment of Rhys ab Tewdwr, however, on the throne of his fathers seemed to present to Gruffydd a more favourable opportunity, than any that had yet occurred, for the assertion of his own claims; and, accordingly, having raised a considerable force, composed chiefly of Irish adventurers, he marched into South Wales to solicit the alliance of Rhys. This, from the nature of the object in view, was obtained without difficulty; and the two chieftains made immediate preparations for giving battle to the usurper.

Trahaiarn, on the other hand, who was not ignorant of these proceedings, spared no exertions to repel the approaching storm, and, having engaged the aid of his cousins, Caradog and Meilyr*, two of the most powerful feudal chiefs of that period, he hastened to accept the challenge thrown out by his adversaries, rejoicing, no doubt, in the opportunity, that seemed to present itself, for repairing the loss his hopes had sustained in the succession of Rhys. Both armies met on the mountains of Carno, near the boundaries of the two divisions of the Principality, and, after one of the most obstinate and sanguinary conflicts recorded in the Welsh annals, victory declared itself for Gruffydd and Rhys, Trahaiarn, with his

* Most probably the sons of Rhiwallon ab Cynvyn, who, with his brother Bleddyn, held the chief power in North Wales from about 1062 to 1068, when he fell in battle.

two kinsmen, and the greater part of his army, having been left dead on the field. The result of this bloody contest, which was fought in the year 1079, was to secure in the legitimate line the sovereignty of those two portions of Wales, that had been for several reigns under the sway of usurpers.

But, whatever accession of weight the power of Rhys may have derived from the overthrow of Trahaiarn, it seems to have been still of an unstable nature, exposed, as it was, to the machinations of the disaffected, who, overawed, perhaps, by the testimonies of popular favour, that accompanied the assertion of his hereditary rights, had thought it prudent to suppress, for a time, the execution of their treasonable designs. But this deceitful calm was of no long duration; for, soon after the battle of Carno, Iestyn ab Gwrgant, Lord of Glamorgan, whose family, during the exile of Rhys, had, for a period, aspired to the sovereignty of South Wales, now reared the standard of revolt in support of his spurious pretensions. Iestyn was a man of an active and enterprising genius, ambitious in his projects, and daringly bold in their execution; but, with these qualities, he united none of those higher virtues, that throw a redeeming splendour even around the deeds of the traitor. He was of an obstinate, morose, and treacherous disposition; and, so unpopular had these qualities rendered him amongst his countrymen, that, upon the death of his father in 1030, he was, by the unanimous voice of the people, excluded from the lordship of Glamorgan, to which, however, he afterwards succeeded on the demise of his uncle Hywel.

Such was the individual that had thrown down the gauntlet of defiance against Rhys, and who, doubtless, hoped to excite, by his example, a general insurrection

against the authority of the venerable chieftain. However, Rhys was not to be intimidated by these rebellious movements, but, on the contrary, aware of the advantage of striking the first blow, he anticipated the designs of Iestyn, and, marching at once into his territory, laid waste the country, and destroyed three of his principal fortresses*. But, Iestyn had soon an opportunity of making reprisals upon his opponent; for, entering his dominions, he in his turn, ravaged the lands of Brycheiniog and Ystrad Tywi. How long this predatory warfare was carried on we are not informed; but, from the spirit and manners of the age, it may reasonably be concluded, that, as long as opportunities presented themselves, there was no suspension of these reciprocal outrages. Some years, however, were yet to elapse before this obstinate rivalry was to yield to the course of events, and to prove, in its termination, the fatal influence which the traitorous schemes of Iestyn were destined to have on the fortunes of Rhys.

But Iestyn was not the only enemy with whom Rhys had to contend. The spirit of disaffection, which had broken forth, proved, as usual, of a contagious nature; and other chieftains too soon followed the evil example that had been set them. Among these, Cadwgan, Madog, and Rhiryd, sons of Bleddyn ab Cynvyn, formerly Prince of Powys†, having, in the year 1087, collected a large force of the most discontented and desperate characters, made an

* These were the castles of Llanilltyd, Dindryvan, and Dinas Powys.

† Bleddyn, after the death of his brother Rhiwallon, above noticed, reigned alone in North Wales, until the year 1072, when he fell fighting against Rhys ab Owain. He was a man of vigorous and comprehensive mind, and found an opportunity, even amidst the tumultuous events of the times, to confer some signal benefits on the jurisprudence of his country. He stands at the head of one of the five royal tribes.

attack on the dominions of Rhys, and compelled him once more to abandon his native land. The aged chieftain on this occasion fled to Ireland, where, however, he did not long remain, but, having raised a numerous body of Irish mercenaries, he returned to his territories in South Wales, which, during his short absence, the sons of Bleddyn, in conjunction with Iestyn, had exposed to all the horrors of fire and sword. The hour of vengeance, however, was now arrived; and, no sooner was the news of Rhys's return, at the head of a powerful army, made known, than his ranks were crowded by the accession of such of his former adherents, as remained true to his cause. The insurgent chiefs, conscious of the dangers of delay, while every hour augmented the force of their enemy, hastened forward with the hope of precipitating Rhys into a premature engagement. The prince, however, was too well prepared for them: he met their combined forces at a place called Llechryd, on the borders of Pembrokeshire, where the rebels experienced a disgraceful defeat. Madog and Rhiryd fell in the combat, and the other leaders owed their safety to flight. After this signal triumph, Rhys dismissed his Irish auxiliaries with a liberal acknowledgment of the important services they had rendered him, and once more resumed the sovereignty of his dominions.

If the venerable age and acknowledged virtues of Rhys, united with his paternal solicitude for the tranquillity of his dominions, could have averted the evils of war, the task would have been effected without difficulty. But the floodgates of dissension, having been once opened, were not, in those times, to be easily closed. Even the admitted good qualities and approved valour of the prince were insufficient to awe into subjection the turbulent spirit, by which the country had been so long harassed. Scarcely had the

insurrection of the sons of Bleddyn ab Cynvyn been so signally quelled, before a new storm menaced the unhappy fortunes of Rhys. About the year 1088, Llywelyn and Einion, sons of Cedivor ab Collwyn, Lord of Dyved, together with their uncle Einion, brother of Cedivor, took up arms, and, having seduced to their cause Gruffydd ab Meredydd, a feudal chieftain of distinction in the territory of Rhys, marched against the aged prince, who met them at a place called Llandudoch. The contest between the two armies was long and resolute; but the cause of justice was, in the end, triumphant. The rebels were defeated with great slaughter, and among the slain were the two sons of Cedivor. Gruffydd ab Meredydd was taken prisoner; but he survived only to meet with a more ignominious, though more merited, fate. He was immediately doomed to the death of a traitor; and the event affords a solitary instance, in those licentious times, of the laws having thus asserted their awful prerogative. The elder Einion, as we learn from Caradog, had the good fortune to escape*; and, fearing to trust himself amongst his own kindred, he sought the protection of Iestyn ab Gwrgant, who was still in avowed rebellion against the prince, by whose talents and courage he had been so frequently foiled.

It may be presumed, that Einion, mortified by his recent discomfiture, stimulated Iestyn to new hostilities against his old rival, in the hope, by this means, of avenging the

* The Welsh historians have generally, on this occasion, confounded Einion ab Collwyn with his nephew of the same name, the son of Cedivor; but Caradog is explicit in his statement, that the latter, with his brother Llywelyn, fell in the battle against Rhys, and that the elder Einion (of whom the other Welsh writers take no notice) fled to Iestyn. This is, no doubt, the correct representation.

disasters he himself had sustained. For, soon after the fugitive insurgent had been received by Iestyn, the latter made fresh incursions on the territories of Rhys, but was, in no instance, able to obtain any decided advantage. His attacks were all triumphantly repulsed, and the venerable son of Tewdwr seemed still proof against all the malice and power of his assailants.

Appearances, however, were, in this instance, delusive. Iestyn, chagrined and impatient at the failure of all his machinations, and still incited by the vindictive persuasions of Einion, adopted the suggestion of the latter to strengthen his resources by an alliance with some Norman adventurers. Einion had, in the early part of his life, served in the English armies both at home and aboad, and had, by this means, contracted a particular intimacy with several Norman chiefs, who, at the same period, filled the ranks of the Conqueror. It accordingly occurred to him, upon the defeat of all his traitorous projects against Rhys, that the acquaintance, he had thus formed, might tend to his advantage on the present occasion. Under this impression, and having also a still more private motive to gratify, he made an offer to Iestyn to procure the assistance of his Norman friends, on the condition, that the other would give him his daughter in marriage. To this Iestyn readily agreed, and farther promised to bestow on her a considerable part of his territory as a marriage portion*. A formal treaty to this effect was signed by both parties, and Einion set out, without loss of time, to solicit the expected aid of the Normans.

The object of Einion's embassy to the English court was soon accomplished. Robert Fitzhamon and twelve other

* According to Caradog, it was the lordship of Meisgyn, that Iestyn had promised to give with his daughter.

military adventurers* immediately assented to his proposal, and engaged to enter into the cause of Iestyn. With this view they levied a formidable body of troops amongst their countrymen, and, with them, accompanied Einion on his return to Wales. In the early part of the year 1090, this band of Norman auxiliaries landed in Glamorganshire, and experienced from Iestyn that cordial reception, to which so important an accession of strength may be supposed to have been entitled. He lost no time in profiting by this new alliance, but, uniting his forces with those of Fitzhamon, invaded the dominions of Rhys, into which he carried the ravages of war with a merciless and insatiate ferocity. By his savage example he incited the Normans to the most wanton acts of pillage and slaughter, and seemed regardless of consequences, so that he insured the gratification of his own unsparing revenge.

These barbarous proceedings had not, however, the effect of dismaying Rhys, who, with his wonted courage, made immediate preparations for giving battle to the invaders. Both armies met on the Black Mountain near Brecon, at a place called Hirwaen Wrgant, where, after a determined and sanguinary struggle, the aged prince of Deheubarth was compelled to fly. For a short time he contrived to elude the vigilance of his ruthless pursuers, but he was eventually overtaken at a spot called Glyn Rhoddnai. Here, while upwards of ninety years of age, he fell beneath the swords of his enemies, whose unrelenting revenge was at length satiated; and with him fell the principality of De-

* The Normans, that accompanied Fitzhamon, were William de Londres, Richard Grenville, Robert St. Quintin, Richard Siward, Gilbert Humphreville, Roger Berclos, Reginald Sully, Peter le Soor, William de Esterling, John Fleming, Payne Tuberville, and John St. John.

henbarth as an independent and integral state*. It was afterwards divided into a variety of feudal lordships, many of which became, ultimately, the property of the very Normans, who had thus contributed to the dismemberment of the country.

Rhys had married a daughter of Rhiwallon, brother to Bleddyn ab Cynvyn, and by whom he left three sons, Goronw, Cynan, and Gruffydd. The first of these was slain soon after the battle, that proved fatal to his father; and Cynan, in flying to avoid a similar end, was drowned in the lake of Cremlyn, which, from this event, assumed the name of the Lake of Cynan. The other son, Gruffydd, owed to his infancy his exemption from the cruel destiny of his family†.

It is a frequent and trite remark, that any extraordinary baseness of conduct, however triumphant for a season, seldom fails to meet, in the end, with the punishment awarded by retributive justice. The fate of Iestyn ab

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* The author of the *Pentarchia*, a Latin poem on the "Five Royal Tribes" of Wales, alludes to this battle, and the fate of Rhys, in the following spirited lines:—

"Queis inter aggressis occurrit Rhesus in armis,
Undique concurrunt acies,—pugna aspera surgit,
Ingruit armorum rabies,—sternuntur utrinque—
Sternitur Haymonis pubes, sternuntur et Angli,
Pro focis, Cambri, dum vos certatis et aris;
Acriter et pugnans, medio cadit agmine Rhesus,
Cum quo totus honor cecidit, regnumque Silurum."

† Gruffydd, according to the usage of those times, was taken for safety to Ireland, where he remained until the year 1112, when he was invited by his countrymen to assist them against their enemies. Having accordingly assumed the sway over a small portion of his paternal dominions, he continued, for thirty-four years, to oppose the Normans and others with signal bravery and success. He died in the year 1136.

Gwrgant exemplifies, in a striking manner, the truth of this observation. No sooner had his treason towards Rhys received its sanguinary consummation, than he refused to fulfil the treaty, into which he had entered with Einion, by giving him his daughter in marriage, as the stipulated reward of the assistance he had been the means of procuring, adding gross insults to his refusal. Einion, exasperated by this treacherous conduct, resolved upon vengeance, and, with this view, had recourse to the same Normans that had so recently fought for Iestyn, and by whom they had been liberally remunerated for their services. To them he disclosed the details of his ill-treatment, of the ingratitude of Iestyn, and of his want of popularity amongst his countrymen, urging this latter circumstance as affording a favourable opportunity for dispossessing Iestyn of his territory. Fitzhamon and his companions, being mere soldiers of fortune, listened, with the utmost complacency, to these representations, and made no scruple of assenting to the proposal of Einion, by cooperating with him against their former ally.

In compliance with this agreement they retraced their steps without loss of time, and made a sudden assault on Iestyn, who, necessarily unprepared for a reverse so unexpected, was compelled to seek, in a precipitate flight, his preservation from a more merited doom. His domains thus fell into the hands of the Normans, who divided the finest portion of them amongst themselves. A mountainous and desolate tract was all they reserved for Einion, as the appropriate reward of his treason towards the venerable prince, to whose fall he had so largely contributed. Thus Einion, as well as Iestyn, became an example of that even-handed justice, which, sooner or later, causes the machinations of the iniquitous to recoil on their own heads. The

very mercenaries, who had been engaged to promote the dark projects of these two traitors, now beheld one despoiled of his patrimony and an exile, and the other confined to a barren pittance of that territory, over the whole of which he had, no doubt, hoped to exercise a sovereign sway*.

The events that crowded the short reign of Rhys ab Tewdwr, and his advanced age when he assumed the sovereignty, must be taken into consideration in our estimate of his character; and, under these circumstances, it must be admitted, that he presents a remarkable instance of that vigour of intellect and steadiness of resolution, which support a man in the most trying extremities. He was of that peculiar cast of mind, which the Roman poet, in one of his happiest effusions, has so well described:—

> Justum et tenacem propositi virum
> Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
> Non vultus instantis tyranni,
> Mente quatit solidâ.———

Like some venerable oak, he stood long unmoved amidst the war of political elements, ere, in the fulness of years, he sunk beneath the growing and overwhelming tempest, which treason had excited around him.

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* This has reference to the prospect he must have entertained upon his anticipated marriage with the daughter of Iestyn, in the event of his surviving that chieftain.

OWAIN GWYNEDD.

The chronological arrangement, adopted in this work, has made it impossible always to consult that variety in the succession of the lives, which may seem desirable. Accordingly, we have now to present the memoirs of another warrior, who, as far as success confers eminence, must be regarded as one of the most illustrious of the Welsh princes. But all greatness is relative, and, in estimating the character of Owain Gwynedd, we must not forget the circumstances under which it was formed. In this view of him we shall see much to admire, whatever may have been his particular imperfections, and which, at last, may be imputable less to the individual than to the age.

Owain Gwynedd first saw the light, most probably, during the close of the eleventh century. His father, Gruffydd ab Cynan, of whom some mention was made in the preceding memoir, was the means, by his defeat of the usurper Trahaiarn, of restoring the sovereignty of Gwynedd, or North Wales, to the legitimate line, he being sixth in lineal descent from Anarawd, to whom that portion of Wales had been originally assigned*. Gruffydd enjoyed his recovered rights during a period of fifty-five years, which were signalized as well by the vicissitudes to which he was exposed, as by his patriotic exertions for the welfare of his country. If, in his wars, he was not always victorious, he amply compensated for his early failures by the triumphs that distinguished the close of his reign, and which were the means of extirpating, for a time at least, the English

* See page 99, *supra*.

and other foreigners that had so long molested the Principality. But in the promotion of these successes, we shall presently see, the subject of this memoir was mainly instrumental. However, to his father belongs the undivided merit of having advanced the cause of religion by the erection of several churches, and of having animated the genius of his countrymen in a peculiar degree by the patronage which he extended to music and poetry. With a view to the improvement of these sister arts, he framed several laws for the regulation of bards and minstrels, and established rewards for their general encouragement. These and similar actions secured to Gruffydd a distinguished place in the esteem of his subjects; and the award of his cotemporaries has been confirmed by posterity*.

From the first memorial, that is preserved concerning Owain Gwynedd, it appears that he was inured, from an early age, to the warlike avocations so necessary in those disturbed times. For we find it recorded, that, in the year 1121, he was employed by his father, in conjunction with his brother Cadwallon, to regain from Meredydd ab Bleddyn, Prince of Powys, some lands of which he had unjustly dispossessed one of his own nephews. The two young chieftains succeeded, without difficulty, in executing the

* It was in the year 1100 that Gruffydd ab Cynan convoked a general congress for the purpose of revising the regulations relating to Welsh music and poetry, and, more particularly, for removing some abuses that had crept into the practice of the minstrels. On this occasion he not only summoned native professors to attend, but admitted also several foreign musicians, and especially from Ireland, where Gruffydd had received his education. And thus, by a union of the musical beauties of other countries with those common to his own, he formed a new and improved code, consisting of twenty-four canons, for the future observance of Welsh minstrels. An old copy of these, with curious illustrations, is preserved in the Welsh school in Gray's-Inn-Lane.

commands of their father, who seems ever to have rejoiced in an opportunity of avenging the cause of the oppressed. Owain and his brother not only recovered the territory in question, but took ample reprisals, for this act of violence, on the lands of Meredydd.

This early trait of valour and spirit on the part of Owain was followed, we may presume, by many others of a similar character. But history has preserved no farther record of the young warrior until the year 1135, when he was again entrusted with a military command, and dispatched, in company with his brother Cadwaladr, on an expedition of far greater importance than that already noticed. But, before we enter on the details, it may be proper to take a brief retrospect of the affairs of South Wales.

The death of Rhys ab Tewdwr was succeeded, in that country, by a miserable state of anarchy and civil dissension. The native chiefs were either involved in continual struggles among themselves, or had to contend against the restless ambition of the Normans, who had been introduced by Iestyn ab Gwrgant. The history of the period, for more than fifty years, presents us, accordingly, with little more than a dismal succession of battles, spoliation, and pillage. And an event happened in the year 1105, which tended considerably to enhance this state of disorder. The memorable inundation of the Low Countries, which took place in that year, drove into banishment a large portion of the natives, many of whom repaired to England, to solicit from Henry I. a settlement within his dominions. Henry, rejoicing in this opportunity of establishing amongst the Welsh, from whom he had experienced no small annoyance, a colony that might prove serviceable to him in his designs on the country, allotted to these foreigners, without regarding the question of right, a large tract of land on the

Pembrokeshire coast. The Flemings, by virtue of this arbitrary grant, and assisted, perhaps, by the Normans and English, who inhabited those parts, took possession of their new territory, and proved, in process of time, by their confederacy with the other foreign settlers, a source of great misery to the original inhabitants.

Such was the state of South Wales about the year 1165, when the sons of Gruffydd ab Cynan marched into the country with the design of expelling the strangers, by whom it had been so long harassed. Upon their arrival, at the head of a considerable force, in Cardiganshire, they succeeded in capturing the castles of several Norman barons, and, having being joined by some other Welsh chiefs, they spread throughout the country, according to the practice of the times, the horrors of plunder and desolation. From some unexplained cause, they did not, on this occasion, pursue their success to any great extent, but returned to North Wales, after having amassed a considerable booty, without accomplishing the ultimate object of the expedition. It is probable, however, that they had no other design, in this retrograde movement, than to augment or recruit their forces. For in the same year they once more invaded South Wales at the head of a well disciplined army of six thousand foot and two thousand horse, and, having again received the cooperation of the native chieftains, they subdued the whole country as far as the town of Cardigan*.

Whilst Owain and his fellow-warriors were pursuing this triumphant career, the English governor of Cardigan had taken the alarm, and, uniting under his command as many

* This town was then in the hands of the English, and was the residence of a governor over this part of the country. But his power must have been extremely limited, as well as insecure.

as he could collect of the English, Normans, and Flemings, both in Wales and the Marches, advanced to give battle to the Welsh, on their approach to Cardigan. The men of North Wales met the attack with their characteristic bravery, and, after an obstinate and sanguinary encounter, completely routed their adversaries, who fled precipitately to their fortresses, leaving more than three thousand of their number dead on the field. The result of this decisive victory was the expulsion of the foreigners from the settlements they had occupied, and the reinstatement of several Welsh proprietors in the lands of which they had been dispossessed. Owain and his brother, having thus, in a great measure if not entirely, effected their design, returned to North Wales, enriched at once with plunder and glory.

The death of Gruffydd ab Cynan, in the year following this exploit, placed Owain, as his eldest son, on the throne of Gwynedd, and thus afforded him a more extensive field for the exercise of his talents and courage. Nor was he slow in evincing his attachment to the pursuits, in which he had already so much excelled. For, scarcely had his father ceased to exist, before he, for a third time, in conjunction with his brothers, invaded South Wales, where the foreign settlers, whom he had so recently discomfited, seem to have become again troublesome. Upon this occasion, we may presume, he accomplished the purpose of his expedition; for, after having destroyed the castle of Caermarthen as well as some other Norman fortresses, he returned in triumph to his native land.

For some years afterwards we have no account of the proceedings of Owain, though it is certain that a mind like his could not have been, for so long a period, inactive. In the year 1142, however, we find him again in arms, but in one of those domestic feuds, which are of such frequent

occurrence in the history of the Principality. His brother Cadwaladr, who was in possession of some territory on the borders of South Wales, had the misfortune, in a broil with his son-in-law Anarawd, to occasion the death of the latter, either by his own violence, or by the agency of some of his dependents. The news of this outrage no sooner reached Owain, than, suffering the feelings of humanity to triumph over those of nature, he resolved to be revenged on his brother. Accordingly, accompanied by his son Hywel, he entered the territory of Cadwaladr, where, after committing many ravages, he burnt the castle of Aberystwith. Cadwaladr, in the mean time, having been apprised of Owain's design, and conscious of his inability to contend with him, had fled for assistance to Ireland, which appears to have been, formerly, the common resort of the Welsh refugees. Here Cadwaladr found no difficulty, by promises of plunder and other rewards, in raising a band of mercenaries, with whom he returned to Wales, and landed at Abermenai in Caernarvonshire, at no great distance from his brother's residence. For a short time this predatory host succeeded in their designs of pillage; but Owain, having been apprised of the hostile incursion, made haste to prevent its farther extension. But, when the two armies had met, the cause of nature seems to have resumed its ascendancy, and the brothers were again reconciled.

The Irish adventurers, disappointed by this arrangement in their full expectations of plunder, seized the person of Cadwaladr as a security for their promised remuneration. Cadwaladr, accordingly, and on condition of receiving his liberation, gave them two thousand head of cattle, and allowed them to retain all the booty that had been the fruit of their invasion. No sooner, however, had he regained his freedom, than Owain commenced a sudden

assault on the Irish, of whom he put the greatest part to the sword; and, having also despoiled them of their cattle and plunder, he compelled the miserable remnant of these freebooters to make a precipitate and disgraceful retreat to their native shores.

About two years after this expulsion of the Irish, Owain was visited by a severe domestic affliction in the death of his son Rhun, who, according to the testimony of Caradog, exhibited an almost perfect union of mental and personal accomplishments*. With every allowance, however, for the exaggerated praise of the historian, it seems certain that he was a youth of a very amiable disposition and of high promise; and it is probable, that his father had built on this basis the most sanguine hopes of his future celebrity. For, such was the shock his death occasioned to Owain, that he became utterly inconsolable; and, during a long period, all artifices proved unavailing to rouse him

* As the reader may not be displeased to have the description of an accomplished Welshman during the twelfth century, we subjoin a translation of Caradog's account, the value of which may be enhanced by stating, that the historian was contemporary with the individual whose portrait he draws:—"At the close of this year (1144) died Rhun ab Owain, a youth the most praiseworthy of the whole race of the Britons, and who had been educated with a liberality suitable to his princely birth. In his form and appearance he was comely, in his discourse mild. He was affable to every one, and circumspect in his bounty. Amongst his family, condescending; dignified amongst strangers; terribly violent towards his enemies; and facetious amongst his friends. He was of a tall person; his complexion fair; his hair curly and flaxen; and his visage long. His eyes were of a pale blue, wide and full; his neck long and thick; his chest broad; and his body slender. His thighs were stout; his legs long and tapering, with long and narrow feet, and fingers perfectly straight." Such is Caradog's portrait, literally, *factus ad unguem;* but, be its quaintness what it may, it is impossible not to allow, that it must have had some foundation in the merit of the original.

from the despondency to which he had abandoned himself. Uninterested in surrounding objects or passing events, he appeared to live only in the melancholy remembrance of his irreparable loss; and the yearnings of paternal affection established, for a season, an undisputed dominion within his breast.

An event, however, at length occurred, to awaken him from this state of torpor. The English had, for some time, obtained important possessions on the borders, or marches, of North Wales, where they had erected several fortresses, that proved at once a protection to their own kingdom, and a great annoyance to the Welsh. Among these, the castle of Mold, or Monthault, in the county of Flint, was distinguished by its strength, and, consequently, by the means it possessed of molesting the neighbouring country. And, notwithstanding the frequent sieges to which it had been exposed, it still continued to rear aloft its crest of defiance*. In that period of the life of Owain, of which we are now speaking, about the year 1145, the occupiers of this castle had committed many ravages on the Welsh territory, which, at length, so exasperated Owain, that he determined, if possible, to avenge himself, by the

* This castle was, from an early period, in the possession of the Saxons and Normans. The first proprietor, of whom we have any particular account, is Eustace Omer, who did homage, for it and the adjacent domains, to William Rufus, during the close of the eleventh century. It soon afterwards came into the possession of Roger de Monte Alto, who was Seneschal of Chester, about the year 1130. It was, most probably, he, or his immediate descendant, that occupied it when it was destroyed by Owain Gwynedd. That the castle was rebuilt after this disaster is evident, from its capture by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, in 1201. In 1327 it was conveyed, with the territory adjoining, to Isabella, Queen of Edward II., and it was finally vested in the crown, where it continued until the time of Henry IV. Since that period, it has become again private property.

destruction of the fortress. With this intent, and animated moreover by the anticipated conquest of so rare a prize, he laid siege to it with a large force; but his assaults were, for a long time, repulsed with so much spirit, that all hope of success seemed at an end. Owain's accustomed perseverance, however, did not forsake him. He stimulated his men, by his example, to such an increase of energy and exertion, that his object was at last effected. The castle was taken and levelled with the ground; and such part of the garrison, as had not fallen in its defence, were made prisoners. So elated was the Welsh chieftain, by his triumph over this powerful and obstinate foe, that, in the exultations of his victory, he is said to have forgotten the grief that had previously overwhelmed him, and that, from this moment, it oppressed him no more.

After this event, the English, as if to repair the disaster they had sustained, seem to have resolved upon the most vigorous hostilities against Owain; but it was not until the year 1149, that any extensive enterprise was adopted. In that year Randulph, Earl of Chester, between whom and Owain there had existed a long and rancorous animosity, made formidable preparations for invading North Wales. He not only raised a numerous army of English, but procured also the alliance of Madog ab Meredydd, Prince of Powys*, who, jealous perhaps of Owain's power, and impatient of the feudal services he owed him, rejoiced in this proffered opportunity of building his own independence on the ruins of that of his rival. With this force Randulph marched into Flintshire, but had not advanced many miles before he was met by Owain, who had taken his usual prudent precautions against a surprise. He had even, on

* He held the sovereignty of Powys from 1133 to 1159.

this occasion, determined to make the first onset, and, accordingly, marched towards the enemy, whom he encountered at no great distance from the town of Flint. The English troops, relying on their superiority, both in numbers and discipline, had, no doubt, looked forward with confidence, to the result of the contest. But, however elated their prospects, the illusion was of no long continuance; for such was the sudden and impetuous valour, with which Owain assailed them, that

——" they, astonished, all resistance lost,
All courage,"——

and sought their security in a disgraceful flight. But so resolutely did the Welsh chieftain carry on his victorious pursuit, that a few only of the fugitives returned to Chester, with the calamitous tidings; and these owed their safety rather to the fleetness of their horses, than to any relaxation of vigour on the part of their assailants.

The effect of this triumph on the English seems to have been very decisive, since we do not find, for some years afterwards, that they made any farther efforts towards accomplishing their favourite project of subduing North Wales. Owain, therefore, as far as foreign hostilities could affect him, must have enjoyed a considerable share of repose. But it was the misfortune of his reign, and in a great degree also, perhaps, of the particular character of the Welsh of that age, that the suspension of external warfare was but a signal for the renewal of domestic dissensions. And, above all, family feuds appear to have been a prominent characteristic of this troubled period. An instance of these we have already seen in the contention between Owain and his brother Cadwaladr; and to this several others might have been added, from among the predatory conflicts that were continually taking place between the

sons of Owain and their uncles, against whom the former were generally successful.

In one of these unnatural contests, Hywel ab Owain* had taken his uncle Cadwaladr prisoner, and, as usual, seized his possessions. Cadwaladr, after lingering about two years in confinement, contrived, in the year 1151, to make his escape, and, by way of some retaliation for the injury he had sustained, made an incursion, with several followers, into the island of Anglesea, a great portion of which he reduced before any effectual opposition could be made to his progress. At length, however, Owain, with whose connivance, in all probability, if not with his actual encouragement, his son had previously acted, despatched a considerable force against his brother, and compelled him to fly for protection to England, where he had some powerful friends in the connexions of Gilbert, Earl of Clare, whose daughter he had married. But this family discord, the fertile source of so many crimes, was productive, in the same year, of a transaction far more disgraceful to the memory of Owain. His brother, Cadwallon, recently deceased, was succeeded in his rights and property by his son Cunedda; but Owain, having tyrannically resolved to appropriate these possessions to his own use, had resort to an act of inhumanity, for which it would be difficult to find a parallel, except in the annals of oriental barbarism. He, in the first place, had the eyes of his nephew taken out, and afterwards, by another savage operation, excluded him from

* Hywel was not only a warrior, but a poet. Eight of his productions have reached us, and are printed in the *Archaiology of Wales*. They are almost all of an amatory nature, and give abundant proof of the talent as well as elegant mind of the writer. Indeed, he is almost the only one of the early Welsh bards, that has dedicated the effusions of his muse to the celebration of the fair sex.

all chance of descendants, who might hereafter lay claim to his property. It is hardly possible to reconcile this act of cruelty with some other traits in the character of Owain; but in an age; when the moral habits were so unsettled, and when a rapacious avarice too often predominated over every better feeling, even this action, brutal and indefensible as it was, ought not to be a subject of much surprise.

At length, Owain was roused from these disgraceful dissensions at home, by the dangers to which his dominions were exposed from without. Henry II., who had recently ascended the English throne, provoked, we may presume, by the unsuccessful issue of the former enterprises against North Wales, and resolving, by one great blow, to atone for all previous failures, projected the entire subjugation of the country, and formed his preparatory measures upon a scale corresponding with the hazard of the undertaking. Independently of the motives of personal ambition, that impelled him to the prosecution of this design, he was also stimulated to it by the urgent solicitations of the exiled Cadwaladr, who hoped, by this means, to obtain some redress for the injuries he had endured through his brother and nephew. And Madog ab Meredydd, who still smarted under the idea of his feudal subservience to Owain, united his representations with those of Cadwaladr, in favour of the enterprise.

Henry, accordingly, instigated by these various motives, and auguring, no doubt, from the extent of his resources, a certainty of success, marched into North Wales, in the year 1156, and, encamping on Saltney Marsh, in the vicinity of Chester, seemed to challenge Owain to the unequal combat. The Prince of Gwynedd, on the other hand, was neither unprepared for this invasion, nor slow to oppose it: on the contrary, he advanced with a powerful force to Basingwerk, on the Dee, in order to give battle to the English monarch.

The latter, on being apprised of this, sent off a part of his army, under the command of some of his most experienced nobles, to check the presumptuous advances of the Welsh. But, the detachment had scarcely been separated from the main body, before they were surprised in a wood by Davydd and Cynan, two of Owain's sons, who assailed them with such effect, as to compel them, after sustaining a great loss, to return precipitately to the royal camp.

The event of this skirmish must have been calculated, one would think, to depress Henry's hopes of the success of his expedition, in proportion as it exalted his opinion of the adversaries with whom he had to engage. However, he was not of a character to be intimidated by any unimportant reverse; so, breaking up his camp, he resolved upon the adoption of more decided measures. With this view, he marched along the coast of the Dee, with the intention of throwing himself into the rear of Owain's forces, and thus intercepting their communication with their supplies. The cautious Welshman was, however, aware of the meditated manœuvre, and accordingly, retiring to a spot, which, to this day, bears the name of Cil Owain, or Owain's Retreat, he effectually frustrated the designs of the enemy. Henry, upon this, was compelled to fortify himself within the Castle of Rhuddlan, on the Flintshire coast, after having been exposed, as it would appear, during the march from Saltney, to much personal danger. It is related by an English historian*, that, while passing through a defile near Flint, Henry's standard-bearer, the Earl of Essex, was so vigorously beset by the Welsh, that, dropping his ensign, he took to flight, exclaiming in his panic,—"The king is slain." The alarm flew, with electric rapidity, through the

* W. Parvus, lib. ii. c. 5.

English ranks, and the Welsh, profiting by the incident, pursued the enemy so closely, that it was not without difficulty, the king actually eluded the fate, which, in the terrified imagination of his standard-bearer, had been already accomplished. Several of his principal officers, however, fell in the action, and, among them, some of his most distinguished nobles. Thus, although Henry succeeded in penetrating so far into the country, it was an advantage which he acquired without any particular honour.

The period of Henry's stay at Rhuddlan was not signalized by any remarkable event*. Owain, having quitted his place of retreat, encamped on an adjacent eminence, whence he was enabled frequently to annoy the invaders. But the war seems to have terminated after some unimportant skirmishes, and Henry was, without doubt, glad to abandon an enterprise, by which he had gained so little either of glory or solid advantage. A treaty was, accordingly, concluded between him and Owain, in which the only condition exacted from the latter, was that he should reinstate his brother Cadwaladr in his former possessions. Henry, however, retained and garrisoned the fortresses of Rhuddlan and Basingwerk, which seem to have constituted all the fruits of this formidable campaign, if we except, indeed, the hostages which Henry exacted

* This expression has reference merely to the transactions between Henry and Owain. In other respects, it may be stated, that, during this period, Madog ab Meredydd was despatched with the English fleet, to make a descent upon Anglesea. He succeeded in his expedition so far as to set fire to a few churches, and to commit other ravages; but the invaders were ultimately cut off by the inhabitants of the island, who rose in a body against them, and none survived to bear the melancholy news to the fleet. Madog, upon learning this catastrophe, returned to Rhuddlan; but it cannot be supposed that he was received by Henry with any particular welcome. His treason to his country, however, deserved no better fate.

from Owain, for the due performance of the treaty. These were his two sons, Rhys and Cadwallon.

The liberation of the Welsh from the dangers of foreign invasion became, as usual, the signal for a renewal of their domestic feuds. But it cannot be necessary to follow Owain through all the intrigues and broils, in which he was thus engaged, during the five years that succeeded the departure of the English. About the close of this period, however, he undertook an expedition of some consequence against Hywel ab Ievav, a chieftain of Powys, who had destroyed a castle belonging to Owain. The latter, incensed by this outrage, marched into Hywel's territory, where he took ample revenge, by the plunder and devastation to which he exposed it. The inhabitants, roused by these provocations, united in considerable force, under the command of Hywel, who, accordingly, pursued the invaders to the banks of the Severn; but Owain's customary good fortune did not forsake him. For, while the enemy were in the heat of the pursuit, he suddenly made a retrograde movement, and assailed them with such impetuosity, that, after the loss of about two hundred men, the remainder of Hywel's force was compelled to seek its safety in a precipitate retreat. Owain, having left orders for rebuilding the castle which had been the cause of this quarrel, returned to his dominions, more than usually elated with the triumph he had thus obtained over an adversary of no very formidable description.

While Wales was thus agitated by intestine divisions, Henry, anxious, no doubt, in some way to indemnify himself for the little success that had attended his former enterprise, conceived again the design of subjugating the country. And some predatory incursions, which one of Owain's sons had recently made into the English territory,

on the marches of North Wales, operated as an additional incentive to this undertaking*. Accordingly, Henry once more marched to Rhuddlan, which was still garrisoned by the English; but, so inadequate were his means, or so formidable the resistance he experienced from Owain, that, after remaining there but a few days, he returned with his army, in haste, to England, for the purpose of procuring a reinforcement.

Experience had now taught Henry, that the enemy, with whom he had to deal, was, by no means, of a contemptible character, and that it would require a powerful levy of troops to enable him to renew his campaign, with any probable chance of a fortunate issue. Influenced by this feeling, he availed himself of all his resources, not only in England, but also in France and Flanders, to augment his forces to such an extent, as seemed to render the accomplishment of his object no longer doubtful. In the year 1164, then, at the head of a well-appointed and numerous army, eager for conquest and thirsting for revenge, the English monarch marched, for a third time, against North Wales; and, having reached Oswestry, in Shropshire, on the confines of Owain's dominions, he there pitched his camp.

It happened fortunately for the Welsh upon this occasion, that a sense of impending danger had united them all in one common cause. Their private jealousies, their family animosities, were, for a while, forgotten in the patriotic ardour, with which they resolved to defend their native soil against its powerful and implacable foe. Ac-

* The incursion here alluded to was one made by Davydd ab Owain, on the borders of Flintshire, in the vicinity of Chester, where he took considerable booty, both of men and cattle, with which he returned to the Vale of Clwyd.

cordingly, the several rulers, and other chieftains, of the three provinces of the Principality, actuated by one generous impulse, combined their forces against the invaders. Owain, upon being apprised of the approach of the English, repaired, with his brother Cadwaladr, and the whole strength of his dominions, to Corwen, in Merionethshire, where he was met by Rhys ab Gruffydd and Owain Cyveiliog, Princes of South Wales and Powys, as well as by several other subordinate chiefs, with all the forces they could muster within their respective districts. Thus, it may be presumed, the Welsh were in possession of an army, formidable at least by its numbers, if not equal in discipline and appointments to that of the enemy. However, what they may have wanted in these respects seems to have been, in a great measure, supplied by the prudence of their commanders, who, encamping on the mountainous lands in the vicinity of Corwen, resolved to wait the assault of the English, rather than risk a battle in a less advantageous situation*.

Henry, on the other hand, as soon as he was aware of the formation of this patriotic league within so short a distance from his army, determined upon an immediate attack. With this view he broke up his camp, having first given directions, that the woods should be cleared along his projected route, in order to avoid an ambuscade, which his former contest with Owain had given him so much reason to apprehend. This precaution, however, could not secure him from a surprise. His advanced guard was suddenly attacked, in its way through a defile, by a small body of the Welsh, though not with any final advantage; for,

* The place of Owain's encampment, on this occasion, is still to be traced, by a tumulus of earth, and other vestiges, to the south of the village of Cynwyd, at no great distance from Corwen.

after much bloodshed on both sides, the pass was forced by the English troops, who proceeded, without farther opposition, towards the spot where the Welsh army was stationed.

The English had, by this time, become acquainted with the particular mode of warfare adopted by their opponents, and, accordingly, avoiding the glens and defiles, confined themselves to the open grounds*. While in this situation, and the two armies in sight of each other, Henry, it is probable, unable to dislodge the Welsh from their commanding position, strove to tempt them to a general engagement; but the latter, acting with their accustomed caution, and profiting by their more intimate knowledge of the country, contented themselves by harassing the out-posts of the enemy, and by intercepting their supplies, which they did so effectually, that the English were reduced to the most wretched extremities. And, the weather becoming, at the same instant, particularly unfavourable, Henry was driven to the humiliating necessity of abandoning an enterprise, on which he had entered with so determined a spirit, and with such flattering hopes. Thus foiled in his most vigorous attack on the independence of Wales, he returned home in a state of the deepest mortification, and, in a barbarous ebullition of revenge, caused his Welsh hostages, among whom were the two sons of Owain already mentioned, to be immediately deprived of their eyes. And this wanton and indefensible act of cruelty was the only consolation he could administer to his disappointed ambition†.

* It is thought that the post, selected by Henry, was a part of the Berwyn Mountains.

† This expedition, however, was not the last of Henry's attempts against North Wales. For, soon after its failure, he again set out for the purpose

Thus was Wales once more rescued from the perils of foreign hostility, and, had it not been for the evil genius that still haunted its domestic repose, the evening of Owain's reign might have been one of unclouded serenity. But, a year had scarcely elapsed since Henry's ill-omened invasion, before the Welsh prince felt himself again under the necessity of taking up arms, in order to avenge a private outrage committed by Owain Cyveiliog, Prince of Powys, who, with another chieftain, had forcibly dispossessed Iorwerth Goch of some lands which he held in Powys. Owain, as we have before seen, was ever ready to succour the oppressed, and, accordingly, uniting his forces with those of Rhys ab Gruffydd, he succeeded in expelling Owain Cyveiliog from his dominions, and in restoring to Iorwerth the property of which he had been despoiled. Nor were Owain and Rhys unmindful of their own interests, but availed themselves of their triumph, to divide a portion of the conquered territory among themselves and their dependents. The Prince of Powys, however, having soon afterwards procured a formidable reinforcement of English and Norman adventurers, repossessed himself of his territory, and destroyed one of the castles which Owain had seized. Thus terminated the last intestine struggle, which appears to have taken place in North Wales, during the lifetime of Owain.

The only other memorable event, that distinguished the career of this chieftain, was the capture of Rhuddlan Castle, which had remained in the hands of the English ever since Henry's first invasion. But, so strong was the garrison, and so obstinate the defence that it made, that it was not

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of invading the country; but, after having conveyed his troops, by sea, as far as Chester, he suddenly relinquished his design, and disbanded his army.

until after a siege of three months, that the combined forces of Owain and Rhys were able to accomplish their object. To this success they added the reduction of another fortress in the vicinity*, which appears to have completed their triumph over the English, who were now entirely dislodged from their conquests in Gwynedd.

The reign and life of Owain were now drawing near to their termination. He survived this last victory but three years, and died in the year 1169, leaving his country in such a state of tranquillity, as it had rarely before experienced, and was not now destined long to enjoy. He had exercised the sovereign power over North Wales for thirty-two years, during which long period he had scarcely experienced a single reverse; and the fame, which he bequeathed to his country, was that of one of its most valorous and most fortunate princes. His children, including such as were illegitimate, as well as those born in wedlock, were numerous. The Welsh historians have preserved the names of twenty; and, of these, seventeen are reported to have survived their father. The remains of Owain were deposited in the episcopal Church of Bangor, in Chernarvonshire†.

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* This was the Castle of Prestatyn, at no great distance from that of Rhuddlan. The latter fortress is recorded to have been built by Llywelyn ab Sitsyllt, who governed Wales from the year 998 to 1021. It soon afterwards passed into the hands of the English, from whom, however, it was retaken by Gruffydd ab Cynan. Rhuddlan is supposed to have been, anciently, a place of considerable importance, as it has remains of a hospital and an abbey; and an old gate, at least half a mile from the present town, seems to indicate the former extent of the place.

† Giraldus Cambrensis, who visited Bangor about twenty years after the death of Owain Gwynedd, communicates, in his "Itinerary," the following information relating to the tomb of the Welsh prince:—"On our return to Bangor from Mona, we were shewn the tombs of Prince Owain and his

In contemplating the life of Owain Gwynedd, it is impossible not to feel, that he was, at once, one of the most politic, valorous, and successful chieftains, that ever bore sway in the Principality*. But it cannot, on the other hand, be denied, that these high qualities were united with others of a far different nature, or that the lustre of his general fame was obscured by some dark and disgraceful blemishes. While we extol his character as a sovereign, we are compelled to condemn his failings as a man. While we view, with admiration, the wary policy, the resolute courage, and, above all, the liberal spirit of patriotism, with which he opposed and defeated the ambitious projects of Henry, we are bound to contrast with them the pitiful jealousies, which involved him in so many domestic feuds, and, especially, as the foulest blot on his fame, his brutal treatment of his nephew Cunedda. Yet, it should in candour be admitted, that much of this inconsistency in the

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younger brother Cadwaladr, who were buried in a double vault, before the high altar, although Owain, on account of his public incest with his cousin-german, had died excommunicated by the blessed martyr St. Thomas, and the Bishop of that See has been directed to seize a proper opportunity of removing his body from the church." In obedience to this bigoted mandate of Becket, as we learn from the Hengwrt MSS., the body was soon afterwards removed into the adjoining church-yard; but, in order to escape the indignation of the people, the sacrilegious deed was effected by means of a subterraneous passage, excavated purposely for the occasion.

*. The author of the *Pentarchia* sums up Owain's character in the following expressive couplet:—

"Consilio felix princeps, fortissimus armis,
Civibus ille novus Solomon, novus hostibus Hector."

Caradog and Humphrey Llwyd also bear testimony to the same distinguished endowments, which Warrington, in his History of Wales, likewise admits, but with some little qualification.

conduct of Owain may be ascribed to the restless temper and unsettled condition of the times, which, however favourable to the exercise of great national virtues, were, at least, as likely to encourage the dominion of the less controllable passions. Of both these effects, contradictory as they may seem, the life of Owain Gwynedd furnishes a remarkable illustration.

But the military talents and public merits of Owain did not constitute his sole praise. He stands distinguished among the rulers of Wales, for the patronage which he afforded to the votaries of the muse. Although we have no direct historical testimony on this point, the number of bards that flourished during his time, and the glowing strain of panegyric, in which he is celebrated by them, even in the pieces still extant, leave no doubt as to the fact*. And it may be considered as a corroboration of this assumption, that one of his own sons, as has been already incidentally noticed, shone conspicuous among this gifted

* The history of Welsh poetry presents two remarkable epochs, the sixth and the twelfth centuries. The latter, in particular, merits the title of the "Augustan era;" and there can be little question, that it originally owed this distinction to the patronage, which Gruffydd ab Cynan extended to the bards, as noticed in the early part of this Memoir, and in which he was, no doubt, imitated by his son and successor. Consequently, the reign of the latter was peculiarly signalized by the cultivation of the national *awen;* and the names, and some of the effusions, of several of its most eminent votaries, have descended to these times. Among them, Gwalchmai, Cynddelw, Davydd Benvras, Llywarch ab Llywelyn, and the two Meilyrs, in addition to Hywel, the son of Owain Gwynedd, hold a conspicuous place; and several of their compositions, even under all their manifest disadvantages, still breathe the glowing spirit of genuine poetry. The limits of a note do not suffice for examples; but the English reader, who may feel any curiosity on the subject, will find several metrical versions in the three volumes of the *Cambro-Briton*, recently published. The originals are all to be seen in the *Archæology of Wales.*

fraternity. Whatever, then, may have been the natural failings of Owain Gwynedd, to whatever excesses the influence of particular circumstances may have seduced him, he must still be regarded as one of the most eminent characters of Wales, during the season of her independence. And, as a fortunate opponent of the warlike designs of the English, he has no rival in the history of his country.

GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS.

AMONG the individuals, who have conferred any distinction on the literary annals of Wales, it is impossible, with any degree of justice, to overlook the subject of the ensuing memoir. Whether we regard him with reference to his talents, natural or acquired, or to the zeal, which, in many instances, he manifested in the service of his country, his claims on our respect cannot be deemed inconsiderable. And, had it been his lot to be born in a more enlightened age, there is every reason to conclude, that he would have bequeathed to posterity a splendid fame.

Giraldus de Barri, or, according to his common designation, Giraldus Cambrensis*, was born in the year 1146, at a place called Maenor Pyr, now Manorber Castle, near Tenby, in the county of Pembroke†. His father, William de Barri, was of Norman extraction; but, by his mother's side, Giraldus was descended from the ancient princes of

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* He is also known by the name of Sylvester; but this appears to have been merely an epithet of ridicule or contempt, bestowed upon him by his juvenile associates.

† The ruins of Maenor Pyr (the Lords' Manor), now corruptly called Manorber, are still to be seen on the shore to the west of Tenby. Giraldus, ignorant of the true etymology, calls it Pyrrhus's Mansion. It was, in his time, he tells us, "adorned with stately towers and bulwarks, having, on the west side, a spacious haven, and under the walls, to the north and north-west, an excellent fish-pond, remarkable as well for its neatness as the depth of its water." This fortress is said to have been founded by Arnulph de Montgomery, in the reign of Henry I., and by him consigned to one of his followers, Gerald de Windsor, called also Fitzwalter, maternal grandfather of the individual whose life we are now considering. Manorber Castle is now the property of Lord Milford.

South Wales, his mother, Angharad, being the granddaughter of Rhys ab Tewdwr, whose life has already been recorded in these pages*. At an early, and almost infantine, age, we are told, the subject of the present memoir gave such indications of his literary and religious predilections, as to induce his father to determine upon educating him for the ecclesiastical profession; and, with a parental presentiment of his future celebrity, he was accustomed to call him his "little bishop." An incident also occurred during this period, which, although trivial in itself, served to mark, in the strongest manner, the enthusiastic reverence which he entertained for the Christian religion. The apprehension of a foreign invasion being at that time prevalent in South Wales, young Giraldus, in order to avoid the impending storm, fled for refuge to a neighbouring church, considering it more secure than any fortress, however strong, could possibly be, and thus, to use his own words, "with a wonderful foresight for his age, declaring the peace and the privileges of the house of God."

The early proofs, thus given of the particular bent of Giraldus's mind, could not fail to attract the notice of his

* According to the most authentic accounts of the family of Giraldus, his grandfather, Gerald de Windsor, mentioned in the last note, married Nest, daughter of Rhys ab Tewdwr, and who had been previously, as Mr. Yorke says, "the beautiful mistress of Henry I., and brought him his eminent son, Robert, Earl of Gloucester." It was in order to strengthen his interests and power in South Wales, that Gerald formed an alliance with Nest, by whom he seems to have had, at least, three sons and one daughter. The eldest son, William, enjoyed, as his mother's inheritance, the Castle of Carew, in Pembrokeshire, and from his son Odo came the illustrious family of Carew. Maurice, and David, Bishop of St. David's, were the other sons. Angharad, the daughter, married William de Barri, who was, most probably, descended from one of the followers of the Conqueror. Giraldus was his fourth son. Bishop Godwin, it should be mentioned, makes Giraldus the son of Maurice, and not of Angharad.

uncle, David Fitzgerald*, at that time Bishop of St. David's, who, accordingly, undertook to provide for his education. He was, in consequence, removed to St. David's, where he had the assistance of regular tutors; but it does not appear, that the progress, he at first made in his studies, was at all in proportion with his subsequent success. On the contrary, he informs us himself, that he was of too negligent and playful a disposition, but that, after frequent remonstrances from his uncle and tutors, he ultimately excelled all his juvenile companions. He seems to have pursued this course of education in Wales until his twenty-third year; and, as he had, before that period, composed his "Metrica Cosmographia†," his attainments must have been of a creditable description. He was now, in compliance with the custom of the age, sent to Paris, at that period the grand centre of European learning and science. Here he resided for the greatest part of three years, devoting himself to the study of theology, rhetoric, and the belles lettres; and, such was his proficiency in the two last-mentioned branches of literature, that, shortly before his departure, he made them the subject of a course of lectures, which were honoured, as he tells us, with the general applause of the University.

In 1172 Giraldus returned to his native country, and, entering into holy orders, soon obtained preferment, being appointed a Canon of Hereford, and Rector of Chesterton, in the county of Oxford. His partiality, however, for the land of his birth, induced him to select it for his place of residence, and, while there, he detected several abuses that

* The third son, as mentioned in the last note, of Gerald de Windsor: he held the See of St. David's from 1149 to his death in 1176.

† This work, he tells us, he wrote in his twentieth year, 1166; it exists only in manuscript.

prevailed in the diocese of St. David's, respecting the payment of tithes and other ecclesiastical dues. Animated by the same zeal for the welfare of the church, that ever afterwards distinguished him, he lost no time in representing these malpractices to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who immediately appointed him his legate for the reformation of the evil. Armed with this authority, he returned to Wales, and proceeded, by excommunication and other penalties, to enforce the strict execution of his duty; and among those, who suffered under his impartial severity, were the Constable of Pembroke Castle* and other persons of note. Nor did he confine his zealous interference to the immediate object of his commission; but, when that was accomplished, he undertook the still more invidious task of reclaiming the morals of the clergy, which appear to have been, at that period, much more lax than was consistent with the sacredness of their professional character. The Archdeacon of Brecon, in particular, is represented to have led a life of open incontinence, unabashed by all the remonstrances of the legate, who, in consequence, made a representation of the case to his uncle, the Bishop of St. David's. The archdeacon was, accordingly, deprived of his preferment, which the bishop transferred to Giraldus, as some return for the benefits the latter had conferred on his diocese.

Giraldus now selected for his residence the small village of Llanddew, near Brecon; but his new dignity appears to have entailed upon him a troublesome succession of litigations and contests, from each of which, however, according to

* Pembroke Castle was built in the time of Henry I., by Arnulph de Montgomery, before mentioned. It was at the period in question, most probably, in the hands of the Flemings, who settled here in the beginning of this century.

his own testimony, he emerged with fresh triumph and honour. The obnoxious office, he had so recently undertaken, and which he had so resolutely discharged, was, in all probability, the chief cause of the disquietude he now experienced. Yet one, at least, of his altercations, of which the particulars are preserved, must have had a different origin. The Bishop of St. Asaph, it seems, laid claim to the privilege of dedicating the Church of Ceri, on the confines of Montgomeryshire; and Giraldus, on the other hand, contended for this right on the part of the Bishop of St. David's. After a long altercation, both parties, actuated by a similar zeal, met in the churchyard of Ceri, for the purpose of asserting their claims; and, for some time, the volleys of excommunications, that were reciprocally discharged, held the contest in doubt. At length Giraldus, being in possession of the church, resorted to the usual extremity in such cases, and consummated his spiritual fulminations by three peals of the bells. The bishop and his party, terror-struck by the appalling sound, no longer dared to prolong the conflict, but fled in dismay, leaving Giraldus in triumphant possession of the field. This ludicrous incident, being soon afterwards reported to Henry II., was the source of no little merriment to him and his courtiers, at the expense of the ecclesiastical combatants; but it seems the Bishop of St. Asaph, who had been a fellow-student with Giraldus at Paris, so far from resenting his defeat, joined the whole country in commending the zealous spirit his adversary had evinced on the occasion*.

* The Bishop of St. Asaph, here mentioned, was Adam, the eighth possessor of that see, which he enjoyed from 1175 to 1181, when he died. He was by birth a Welshman, and was a Canon of the University of Paris. Wharton, in his "Anglia Sacra," gives a long and amusing detail of the con-

Not long after this whimsical triumph on the part of Giraldus, he was unanimously elected, by the Chapter of St. David's, to preside over that see, which had first become vacant by the death of his uncle. Giraldus, however, regarding the honour as premature, thought it most prudent to decline it; but the Chapter, still persisting in their nomination, the case was referred, by the command of Henry, to the Archbishop of Canterbury and his suffragans, who declared in favour of the election. The king, however, refused to confirm it, alleging, as his reason, before a distinguished assembly of prelates, that the acknowledged integrity and talents of Giraldus, united with his noble birth, might have an injurious influence on the newly acquired supremacy of England, in the ecclesiastical affairs of South Wales. When this was repeated to Giraldus, he observed, that "such a public testimony, and before such an audience, was more honourable to him than the best bishopric."

It is probable, that this disinterestedness of Giraldus, both in his original rejection of the episcopal dignity, and his subsequent expression of satisfaction at the king's decision, was more affected than real; for, immediately after these occurrences, which happened in the year 1176, he went a second time to Paris, apparently to divert his chagrin, but for the avowed purpose of renewing his studies in theological and polite learning, or, in his own words, of "erecting the walls of the canon law on the basis of literature and the arts." And, if his own evidence may be received, such was the reputation he had acquired by the eminence and variety of his attainments, and, above

troversy that took place between him and Giraldus, respecting the Church of Ceri. It happened in the year 1176.

all, by his eloquence*, that, after a residence in the French capital of three years, he was offered the Professorship of Canon Law in that University. This honour, however, he also declined, in the hope, most probably, of something more substantial in his own country, which, after remaining some time longer in Paris, he again visited.

His return home was signalized by an act of benevolence, which it may be worth while to record. On his arrival in London, and while on a visit to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he received information that his sister and her husband, who had resided in Winchester, were, owing to some family disagreement, on the eve of being divorced. Without loss of time, he repaired to the Bishop of Winchester's court, which was then sitting in Southwark, and arrived just as the divorce was on the point of being decreed. His sudden and unexpected appearance, however, gave a new direction to the proceedings. The bishop, to whom he was known, suspended his decision; and the discordant couple agreed, at the urgent entreaty of Giraldus, to an immediate reconciliation, and had reason afterwards to rejoice in his charitable intercession.

After remaining a short time in London, Giraldus pursued his journey to Wales, where, upon his arrival, he found the diocese of St. David's in the greatest confusion, owing to the recent tumultuary expulsion of the bishop, Peter de Leia†; but, being entrusted by him with the tem-

* Giraldus, in noticing the effect of his oratory upon the learned Parisians, uses the following modest and becoming expression, which, that none of its merit may be lost, shall be quoted in its original garb:—"Tantâ nempe verborum dulcedine ducti fuerunt et deliniti, ut dicentis ab ore tanquam penduli et suspensi, longo licet eloquio et prolixo," &c.

† Peter de Leia was a Monk of the order of Clugny, and a Prior of the Monastery of Wenlock, in Shropshire.

porary administration of the see, he succeeded in restoring it to some order. He continued to reside in Wales, exercising his function of administrator, for three or four years; but, at length, he left in disgust, in consequence of the bishop's interference with the affairs of the diocese, by excommunicating or suspending several of the clergy. But Giraldus's appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and eventually to the pope, procured the abrogation of these arbitrary proceedings; and the consequent disputes between him and the bishop were ultimately decided in his favour. Yet, notwithstanding this, he resolved once more to quit Wales; and it seems to have been his peculiar destiny, not to be long fixed to any particular spot. Accordingly, in 1184, we find him at the English court, whither he had been invited by the king, who appointed him his chaplain, and also availed himself of his assistance in the government of his conquests in Wales*, praising, in lavish terms, his "good conduct, modesty, and fidelity."

It is evident, that Giraldus was, at this time, in particular favour with Henry; for, independent of the marks of esteem already received, he was, in the year following his arrival at court, commissioned by the king to accompany his son John to Ireland, as his secretary and confidential adviser. The office he thus filled must have insured many advantages to one willing to profit by it; but the only use, Giraldus seems to have made of his residence in Ireland, was to collect materials for his two works on the history and topography of that country. For, upon the Bishoprics

* The actual possessions of the English in Wales at this period were, it is probable, confined to the maritime parts of South Wales, and the territory in the vicinity of the Marches. In North Wales, at least, they had as yet made no permanent conquest.

of Ferns and Leighlin and the Archbishopric of Cashel being successively offered to him, he, on each occasion, rejected the high dignity, alleging, as his excuse, his inability to produce any amendment in the corrupt and disordered state of the Irish church, and, consequently, that he preferred the tranquillity of a private station, to the cares of a public one, however elevated, in which his services could not correspond with his inclination. But this did not prevent him from profiting by what opportunities he possessed, to attempt some reformation in the spiritual concerns of the country. With this laudable view, he delivered an oration, in the Lent of 1186, before a synod convened by the Archbishop of Dublin, in which he inveighed, in bold language, against the immoral and dissolute lives of the Irish clergy. Whether his zeal was followed by any beneficial result, we are not informed, and Giraldus himself had no means of experiencing; for, immediately after the succeeding Easter, he bade adieu to Ireland, and retired again into Wales.

Giraldus's time, immediately after his return to Wales, appears to have been wholly occupied in compiling his two works on Ireland*, for which he had, as already intimated, collected materials while in that country. Upon the completion of these, he repaired to Oxford, for the purpose of reciting them before the University, a ceremony which was accompanied by circumstances of considerable pomp and ostentation on the part of the author. He so arranged the affair, that the recitation lasted during three successive days; and, that his vanity might not want its full measure of gratification, he resolved, that an occasion so important should

* These were his *Topographia Hibernie*, and *Historia Vaticinalis de Expugnatione Hibernia*.

be signalized by an extraordinary instance of his liberality. Accordingly, on the first day of the ceremony, he provided a banquet for all the poor of the city; on the second, for all the superior members of the University; and, on the third, for all the members of inferior rank, as well as for all the military then in the city, and the burgesses of the corporation. Thus terminated this ostentatious parade; and the terms, in which Giraldus speaks of it, abundantly prove the transport it had been the means of imparting. In the fulness of his gratified pride, he describes it as unparalleled in the history of similar festivals, ancient or modern*.

Not long after this event, probably in the year 1188, the subject of this memoir accompanied Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury†, and Chief Justice Glanville, on a tour through Wales, for the purpose of preaching the crusade; and such, from his own report, was the eloquence he evinced in the cause, and especially at Cardigan and Haverfordwest, that numbers of his countrymen, and among them several of the chief nobility, flocked around the standard of the cross. He himself also assumed the holy badge, but, as it would appear, rather by way of example, than with any sincere design of embarking personally in the cause; for he subsequently obtained a dispensation from the vows to which his premature enthusiasm had given birth, upon condition that he should afford all the assistance in his power to the Welsh crusaders, then

* His words on the occasion are,—"Sanctissima quidem res et nobilis, quia renovata sunt quodammodo autentica et antiqua in hoc facto poetarum tempora; nec rem similem in Anglia factam vel præsens ætas vel ulla recolit antiquitas."

† Baldwin was the first Archbishop of Canterbury that visited Wales. His authority was strongly opposed by the natives, who urged, in bold terms, the supremacy of their metropolitan Church of St. David's.

on the eve of joining the fanatical expedition against the infidels*.

The most interesting result, however, of the journey which Giraldus and his brother missionaries made through Wales, is to be found in the "Itinerary" he has left us, describing the country he traversed. For, whatever may be the particular blemishes of that work, it embraces much curious information respecting the manners of the Welsh during a period, of which we have comparatively but few memorials, and must, therefore, be regarded as the most interesting of all the literary remains of Giraldus.

In 1189 Archbishop Baldwin, by way, perhaps, of requiting Giraldus for the services he had rendered to the cause of the crusade in Wales, again recommended him to the notice of Henry, as worthy of high ecclesiastical preferment. That monarch, however, true to his former principles or prejudices on this point, still persisted in his refusal, but offered him a confidential post in the retinue, which he was about to take with him to France. Giraldus, accordingly, accompanied Henry on this occasion, but, on the death of the latter, was soon under the necessity of retracing his steps. On his way home he met, at Dieppe, with an incident, which, however trivial in itself, was nearly exposing him to much inconvenience. On his arrival in that town, he was obliged to hire a new servant, to whom he entrusted all his baggage, containing his "Itinerary," some important letters, and all his ready money, about forty marks. Owing to some accident, the servant suddenly disappeared, leaving Giraldus in a state of considerable distress, and, more particularly, on account of his

* This happened in the reign of Richard I., when Giraldus was absolved from his vows by the Pope's Legate.

manuscripts; nor was it until some days afterwards, when he had ceased to hope for the recovery of his treasure, that it was suddenly restored to him at Abbeville, and he was thus enabled to proceed on his journey*.

Upon his return to England, he seems to have been graciously received by the new monarch, Richard I., who, when departing for the holy wars, deputed Giraldus to act, not only as his legate for the administration of affairs in Wales, but, also, as a coadjutor, in the general regency of the kingdom, with William de Longchamp, Bishop of Ely. In the execution of his trust in Wales, he was particularly successful in allaying the ferment, which, in the southern divisions of the Principality, had been consequent on the death of the late king†.

During the period, in which he was thus engaged, he received successive offers of the Bishoprics of Bangor and Llanddav, but rejected them both, on the pretended ground of their interference with his studies, which he professed himself to be particularly anxious to prosecute. But the true cause of his refusal of these episcopal honours is, most probably, to be found in the partiality he ever retained for his native diocese of St. David's. For, notwithstanding his former coyness on this subject, and the resolute opposition made by Henry to his election, it is

* Giraldus details the particulars of this adventure with considerable minuteness; but the reader will, no doubt, be satisfied with the general outline above given.

† Rhys ab Gruffydd, grandson of Rhys ab Tewdwr, and commonly called Lord Rhys, exercised, at that time, the most extensive authority in South Wales. The death of Henry II., who had been his chief friend and supporter, involved him in several contests with the neighbouring chieftains, as well as with his son Maelgwn; all of whom, it may be presumed, hoped to profit by this change of circumstances.

likely, that he still entertained hopes of securing his favourite object; and he may, consequently, have been apprehensive, that his acceptance of any other see would interfere with these views. Under these circumstances, and with these feelings, he resolved, in 1192, to pay another visit to France, but hearing, on his way thither, of the war that had recently broken out between the two kingdoms, he suddenly altered his plan and retired to Lincoln, for the avowed purpose of studying theology under the chancellor of that diocese, William de Monte, with whom he had contracted an early intimacy at the French University.

Giraldus remained at Lincoln during six or seven years, pursuing, apparently with avidity, his theological studies, and devoting also much of his time to his other literary occupations. During this interval he wrote his "Life of Geoffrey Archbishop of York," and his "Gemma Ecclesiastica," as well, perhaps, as some of his other works. And it deserves to be remembered to his credit, that, during his residence in this city, he had an opportunity of performing an exemplary act of charity, by disposing of his best garments, in a period of severe scarcity, for the purpose of relieving the distressed poor.

In the year 1198 his studious pursuits at Lincoln were, in some degree, interrupted by the death of Peter de Leia, Bishop of St. David's; upon which occasion, he was nominated by the Chapter of the diocese, with two others, to supply the vacancy. However, upon being strongly urged by his friends to canvass for the dignity, he, with the same capricious disposition, or the same affectation of disinterestedness, that appears to have marked his conduct whenever this prize was thrown in his way, once more expressed his reluctance to accept the proffered boon,

alleging, with a prudish delicacy, "that a bishop ought to be sought, and not himself seek*." In the next year, however, he was unanimously elected to the high station, which had been so long the secret object of his ambition; but, Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, rejecting his claim, it was referred to the king, at that time in Normandy, who gave orders that four members of the Chapter of St. David's should appear before him, but died before they could arrive.

Upon the death of Richard, the Chapter of St. David's, still true to their original choice, transmitted a strong recommendation to his successor, in behalf of Giraldus. The letters, conveying this, reached John in Normandy, and were honoured by a reception, which seemed to promise a favourable result; and directions were even given for summoning Giraldus into the royal presence. But appearances were again fallacious; for, upon the new king's arrival in England, the hostility of Hubert was once more triumphant, and Giraldus was again destined to lose the prize, while already, as it were, within his grasp. Having thus suffered so many and such mortifying disappointments, he appears, at length, if his own words might be credited, to have formed a serious resolution to exchange the cares and vexations of a public life, and the treacheries of a court, for the ease and solace of a studious retirement†. But resolutions of this nature are more easily formed than sustained; for he, that has been long accustomed to the high road of ambition, will not suddenly court the tame haunts of privacy and neglect. Some preparatory ordeal is necessary to wean

* "Virum episcopalem peti, non petere, debere."

† His words are—"Nimium temporis, unde mihi plus dolendum est, ambitioni hactenus et perditioni dedi. Igitur latitare mihi, et libris ac literis, quod residuum est dierum, absque molestiâ liceat indulgere."

the mind from its former affections: without this, the vows, extorted from mortified pride or awakened resentment, are rarely productive of their promised fruit.

Such, at least, were the present vows of Giraldus. For, upon retiring to his native country, for the purpose, it may be supposed, of giving effect to his resolution, he was received, by all ranks, with an enthusiastic welcome; and, a convocation being immediately held at St. David's, he was, for a third time, unanimously chosen to fill the vacant see. All thoughts of an ascetic retirement seem, upon this, to have vanished, and to have been succeeded by a more steady determination to pursue the darling object of his secret hopes, than any by which he had been hitherto influenced. Without much persuasion, he yielded to the entreaties of his countrymen, and undertook to repair to Rome, for the purpose, not only of pleading his own cause before the Pope, but also of vindicating the privileges of the metropolitan Church of St. David's, against the ambitious pretensions of Hubert, who alleged its subordination to the superior jurisdiction of Canterbury.

Prior to his departure for Rome, Giraldus made a visit to Ireland, for the purpose, it would appear, of engaging the countenance of his friends in that country, towards the claims he was about to institute in the papal court. After a short stay there, he returned to Wales, and found, that a mandate had arrived, during his absence, from the archbishop and the justiciary, to elect Geoffrey de Henlawe, Prior of Lanthony, to the see of St. David's. Against this, the chapter remonstrated in the most spirited terms, forbidding the interference, either of the archbishop or of Geoffrey, in the affairs of the diocese, so that the matter was now at issue, and all seemed to depend on the important struggle, in which Giraldus was about to engage.

The champion of the Menevian church,—for in this light Giraldus may now be considered,—made immediate preparations for his journey. After a hasty visit to his brother Philip, whom he describes as a man of probity and discretion, and also to the Monastery of Stradflur*, for the purpose of depositing his books there during his absence, he proceeded, with all possible expedition, to Flanders, whence he hastened to Rome, where he arrived on St. Andrew's day, in the same year. He experienced from Innocent III., then Pope, an apparently cordial welcome, and, having presented him with a copy of his works†, received, in return, the flattering compliments of the pontiff, a species of homage to which Giraldus was never indifferent. But, whatever empty honours may thus have been lavished upon him, he was not doomed to enjoy the more substantial fruits of his mission. The Archbishop of Canterbury and his party had taken care, by their intrigues, to pre-engage the favour of the Pope; and, in so venal a court as that of Rome‡, it was no difficult task for power and wealth to triumph over the unaided exertions of an individual, who had only the

* This was a monastery of white monks in Cardiganshire, founded by Rhys ab Gruffydd in 1164. It appears, from one of the works of Giraldus, that he was defrauded of the library, he had deposited there, by the monks, of whose perfidy he complains in the bitterest terms.

† The expression used by Giraldus, in making this present to the Pope, affords a curious specimen of the conceits in which he was wont to indulge. "Præsentarent vobis alii *libras*," he says, "sed nos *libros*." Others have given you pounds, while I give you books. But all the wit evaporates in a translation.

‡ The indignant reproach, applied by Juvenal to the "eternal city" in his day, when he exclaimed—

——"Omnia Romæ
Cum pretio,"——

appears not to have lost any of its propriety in the times of which we are speaking.

justice of his cause to plead in his behalf. However, in the month of May, 1200, about eight months after Giraldus's arrival at Rome, he was appointed administrator of the diocese of St. David's, during the continuance of the litigation, as if it were meant, by this temporary honour, to indemnify him for his ultimate disappointment.

It would be as tedious, as it is unnecessary, to follow Giraldus through all the minute details, which he has himself given of the proceedings in this protracted affair*. Suffice it to say, that, after four long years consumed in the support of conflicting claims, and during which Giraldus made three journeys to Rome, the papal decision, thus long retarded, in order, most probably, to give it a colour of impartiality, was, at length, pronounced against him; and his election by the Chapter of St. David's was declared void. But the question respecting the metropolitan rights of the see remained still undetermined; and Giraldus, when he could no longer be actuated by any selfish motive, solicited permission to advocate the cause of his diocese, in his character of Archdeacon of Brecon. The request appears to have been regarded as a proof of his disinterestedness, and especially by one of the Italian bishops present, who pronounced a public eulogy on the occasion†. But in this object Giraldus was also defeated; and the long pending litigation eventually terminated against the Chapter of St. David's, on both points in dispute.

A new election to the episcopal dignity, which had now

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* See his work entitled "De Gestis Giraldi."

† The prelate here alluded to was Octavian, Bishop of Ostia, a man of a noble family, and of high character. The words, he used on the occasion, were as follows:—"Nunc, reverà, evidenter apparet, quòd magis appetiit et appetit iste ecclesiæ suæ profectum quàm personæ, et quod magis hunc caritas laborare quàm cupiditas fecit."

been unoccupied five years, was ordered by the Pope; and Giraldus, accordingly, as temporary administrator of the affairs of the see, prepared to return to England for the purpose of assisting at the ceremony. In his way through France, however, he had the misfortune, owing to the treacherous artifices of John of Teignmouth, one of the adherents of Hubert, to be taken prisoner by the troops of the Duke of Burgundy*. But it appears, that he was not long detained; for we find him present at the election, which soon afterwards took place at Westminster, before the Justiciary and the canons of St. David's. Upon this occasion, he effectually opposed three candidates that had been nominated by the archbishop, as being ineligible, on account either of their mental incapacity, or their vices†. Other nominations on each side were subsequently made, and the contest at length closed in the election of Geoffrey de Henlawe, the candidate proposed, in 1199, by the Justiciary. At the conclusion of the proceedings, Giraldus addressed

* John of Teignmouth had himself previously fallen into the hands of the enemy, and, actuated by a malicious feeling towards Giraldus, who, he knew, was following his route, he described his person so accurately, that the Duke's soldiers had no difficulty in identifying him. Among other marks, John of Teignmouth particularized his lofty stature and thick bushy eyebrows, which latter were so remarkable, that the unlucky Giraldus had no chance of escaping. Upon learning from the French officer, that this singularity had been the cause of his capture, he declared that, could he have foreseen his eyebrows would have involved him in such a disaster, he would, without hesitation, have cut them off. This jocular sally excited the officer's mirth, and had, probably, the happier effect of procuring for Giraldus an early release from his captivity.

† These were the Abbot of St. Dogmael, the Abbot of Whitland, and one Reginald Foliot. The first was denounced by Giraldus on account of his ignorance, the second, in consequence of his illegitimacy and ambitious temper, and the last, on account of his youth and licentiousness.

the assembly, whom he informed, that, in espousing the election of Geoffrey, he had been influenced by the desire of surrendering his personal feelings to the general wish.

It may be inferred from this circumstance, as well, indeed, as from others, that a material change had recently taken place in the sentiments of the principal clergy of St. David's, who, during the absence of Giraldus at Rome, appear, at length, to have yielded to the artifices of his antagonist, the archbishop, who had been actively engaged, both by menaces and bribes, in seducing them to his cause. His prime agent in this business was the Abbot of Whitland, of whom Giraldus accordingly speaks, in no very respectful terms*. Disgusted by this tergiversation on the part of his countrymen, and mortified, as may well be imagined, by the turn which affairs had taken against him, Giraldus, at last, resolved to terminate his connexion with the diocese of St. David's, by relinquishing the preferment he held in it. With this view, he obtained permission from the archbishop, with whom he was now reconciled, to resign the Archdeaconry of Brecon, and the Prebend of Mathrey, in favour of his nephew, Philip de Barri, for whom he had always meant to procure the reversion of the archdeaconry†. Having thus anticipated his benevolent intention, he had the gratification of seeing his nephew in the enjoy-

* We have here another instance of Giraldus's partiality for the figure *Paronomasia*, which even the sense of his injuries could not suppress; and it induces one almost to suppose he would, at any time, have sacrificed his resentment to a pun. Speaking of the Abbot of Whitland (*Alba Terra*), in reference to his conduct above mentioned, he says—"Albior exteriùs quàm interiùs, habitu quàm actu, nomine quàm omine." It will not bear a translation.

† Philip de Barri, here mentioned, was the third son of Giraldus's brother, of that name, to whom, when on his death-bed, Giraldus had made the promise above noticed, in favour of the son.

ment of a comfortable provision; and he was accustomed, in allusion to his own disappointments, to address him, in the following passage of Virgil:—

> "Disce, puer, virtutem ex me, verumque laborem,
> Fortunam ex aliis."——

Though Giraldus was thus, by a papal decree, excluded from the episcopal honours for which he had so long sighed, several of his countrymen, and, among them, the chieftains of South Wales, recognized his right to the dignity, and, in consequence, conferred on him the honorary title of "Bishop elect." This, it seems, gave great offence to King John, who published several mandates, in which Giraldus is charged with "acting openly against his majesty's crown and dignity." But it does not appear, that he himself ever sanctioned the popular designation with which he was honoured.

After the resignation of his preferment, the subject of this memoir seems to have withdrawn entirely from public life, and the last seventeen years of his existence realized that dream of studious seclusion, which he had before cherished. He resided, during this period, in his native country, devoting his time to the revision of his former works, and to the composition of several others, among which may be numbered his Topographical Description of Wales, and his History of his own Life. In the year 1215, while thus enjoying the *laborum dulce lenimen*, an effort was made, in consequence of a recent vacancy in the see of St. David's, to tempt him from his retreat, by a new offer of the long-coveted prize, and that too, it is said, with the royal concurrence. But the proffered boon is reported to have been accompanied by some dishonourable conditions, to which he could not accede; though it is, by no means,

improbable, that the fire of ambition, from the ravages of which he had suffered so much, was, by this time, extinguished. Twelve years of lettered ease and undisturbed privacy had, no doubt, wrought a wonderful change in his disposition; and even the diocese of St. David's, it may be presumed, no longer possessed the attractions which had inflamed his former and more ardent desires. But, from whatever motives he acted, he withstood the temptation, and continued in his retirement until 1220, when, at the age of seventy-four, he bade adieu for ever to the cares and disquietudes of the world. He was buried in the cathedral of St. David's.

The character of Giraldus, if it be examined in all its points, presents, whether in a moral or literary view, some remarkable contrasts. That he possessed many excellent qualities is not to be denied: among these, his fearless and unwearied zeal for the welfare of the church, his determined hostility against its more dissolute members*, and his charitable and benevolent disposition, evinced on so many occasions, hold a conspicuous place. Nor ought we to omit the notice of his disinterestedness, which was remarkably illustrated in the harassing fatigue he underwent, on various occasions, in the cause of his native diocese, and more especially in his zealous defence of it at Rome, after the total failure of his own suit. To these may be added the lighter virtues of modesty, gentleness, and affability, by which his manners are said to have been distinguished, and

* It was against the monks more particularly, in consequence of their notorious profligacy, that his enmity was excited; and so much was this the case, or so great was the odium that he had incurred, in consequence, from the holy fraternity, that he was accustomed to add to his litany—"From the malice of the monks, good Lord, deliver us."

which, uniting with his noble lineage, his mental endowments, and his personal accomplishments*, obtained for him, we may reasonably infer, the private esteem of Henry II., notwithstanding the political considerations† that interfered with his public advancement.

In the number of his failings are to be reckoned some, which may almost seem to have been incompatible with his good qualities: such, in particular, were his ambition, his vanity, his credulity, and his occasional caprice. His ambition, however, appears to have been of a single and isolated nature, limited to one favourite object, which rendered all others indifferent to him, as was sufficiently shewn in his rejection of the Paris professorship, of the Irish bishoprics, and of those of Llandav and Bangor. And, if it be true that he refused the diocese of St. David's itself, when last offered, on account of the objectionable conditions annexed to the gift, it is a proof that his ambition, even in this confined view of it, was not to be gratified at the expense of his honour. But his vanity admits of no palliation: not only does his ostentatious parade at Oxford supply an incontestable proof of it, but his works abound in the most fulsome allusions to his own merits, both intellectual and personal‡, so that it becomes difficult to imagine

* He is described by Pits, an old writer, as being "staturâ procerus, formâ venustus, moribus benignus, alloquio dulcis et affabilis, mitis, modestus, in omnibus temperans et moderatus." And, with respect to his personal attractions, we have his own evidence, that he was, when young, "tall, and as remarkable for beauty of face, as for elegance of figure."

† These, as already noticed, were founded in his descent from the Princes of South Wales, which, at that period, rendered him a natural object of jealousy to the English government. They operated not only with Henry, but with his successors.

‡ An instance of this has been seen in the last note but one; and a similar one occurs in another place, where he describes his visit to the Bishop of

how such a disposition could have consorted with the alleged modesty of his deportment. His credulous turn of mind is also abundantly evinced from his writings, as, for instance, in his History of the Conquest of Ireland, into which he has incorporated the wild predictions ascribed to the two Merlins, and, accordingly, dignified his work with the title of "Vaticinalis Historia," or the Prophetic History. His Itinerary through Wales, and his several Lives of the Saints, also afford abundant proof of the same imbecility. As for his capricious irresolution, so inconsistent with the uniform tenour of his particular views of preferment, it is sufficiently apparent in his repeated rejection of the diocese of St. David's, when, in 1176 and 1198, it was twice thrown in his way, and especially in the prudery of his conduct on the latter occasion.

In a word, the moral character of Giraldus seems to have been a mixture of contrarieties, in which, however, it is impossible not to admit, that the favourable qualities greatly predominated over those of a different description. The former were obviously the result of inclination and principle; the latter were, most probably, the creatures of accident, and were fostered by those circumstances of the times, over which he had no immediate control. The good, therefore, was, as it were, innate and lasting; and what had a contrary appearance may have been as transient as it was superficial.

But the literary reputation of Giraldus Cambrensis is what more immediately concerns our present purpose; and, in our appreciation of this, we must not lose sight of the age in which he wrote. It was one peculiarly distinguished

Worcester, when, he says, one of the company, sitting opposite him at table, was so captivated with his beauty, that he exclaimed, "Do you think it possible so handsome a youth can ever die?"

by a pedantic affectation of learning, and a tasteless and obscure style of writing; and, if we candidly examine the literary merits of Giraldus by this standard, we shall find, that, although he was not superior to the faults of his age, he was not tamely subservient to them. The most prominent blemishes of his writings are what were also the weaknesses of his mind, vanity and superstition: there are few parts of his voluminous works, that do not partake, more or less, of these characteristics. Yet, in his details of the marvellous, he occasionally qualifies what he describes, by assuring us of his own incredulity*. In general, however, it may be assumed, that what he has related of this nature he himself credited. Of his vanity the instances are frequent and repulsive; yet, however inexcusable on this score as a man, some indulgence may be allowed him as an author. He was always, perhaps, sufficiently conscious of his own importance in this character; and the homage, he was in the habit of receiving from others, had no tendency to diminish his self-esteem. His imperfections as a writer, therefore,—and, if judged by our present advanced state of civilization and knowledge, they are undoubtedly numerous,—will be ascribed, by candour, more to the age than to the man, more to a crudity of taste, than to a deficiency of talent or genius.

The more pleasing task remains, to take a brief survey of his literary excellence; and here again the estimate will be, necessarily, comparative. With a view, then, to the times in which Giraldus lived, it must be allowed, that his knowledge was comprehensive and varied, and that his eru-

* Thus, upon one occasion, he observes—"I know that I have written some things, which will appear to the reader absurd and even impossible; nor am I desirous that a hasty credit should be given to all I have asserted, nor do I believe it myself."

dition extended to some of the most eminent authors in all branches of literature. His classical quotations, particularly from the historians and poets, are numerous, and frequently apposite; and he gives many proofs of his proficiency in theological lore. In the diversity of subjects, which employed his pen, he has been seldom equalled; and, when the disadvantages under which a writer laboured, before the invention of printing, are taken into consideration, it is scarcely possible to speak too highly of his industry and perseverance. His style, although often disfigured by the puerilities and pedantry of the times, is not deficient in an occasional copiousness and variety of expression. Diffuse and unequal as is its general character, it is sometimes distinguished by a strain of eloquence, that decidedly indicates the genius of the writer. In fine, his works evince a degree of learning and talent, not often united in the same author, and rare indeed for the period in which he flourished.

A catalogue of his productions has been preserved, as drawn up by himself; but it is evidently incomplete. It embraces, however, nineteen different works; and the order, in which they appear, may be presumed to be that in which they were written. The following is the list:—1. Chronographia et Cosmographia Metrica*. 2. Topographia Hibernica. 3. Expugnatio Hiberniæ. 4. De Legendis Sanctorum. 5. Vita Sti. Davidis. 6. Vita Sti. Caradoci. 7. Vita Sti. Ethelberti. 8. Vita Sti. Remigii. 9. Vita Sti. Hugonis†. 10. Liber de Promotionibus et Persecutionibus Gaufredi, Ebor. Abpi. 11. Symbolum Electo-

* This work, he says, was written in hexameters and pentameters, in his juvenile years, and was more of a philosophical than a theological character.

† The last two "saints," here mentioned, were Bishops of Lincoln.

rum. 12. Liber Invectionum*. 13. Speculum Duorum Commonitorium et Consolatorium†. 14. Gemma Ecclesiastica. 15. Itinerarium Cambriæ. 16. Cambriæ Topographia. 17. De Fidei Fructu, &c. 18. De Principis Instructione. 19. De Gestis Giraldi laboriosis. In addition to these, it appears that he wrote also the Life of Henry II., the Acts of King John, an English Chronicle, the Praises of Wales, and a Metrical Epitome of his Cambrian Topography, besides several others of inferior interest. His works, relating to Ireland, were published by Camden, at Frankfort, in 1602, and those, having reference to Wales, by Dr. Powell, in 1585, and by Wharton, in his "Anglia Sacra," where may likewise be found his book "De Gestis Giraldi." The "Gemma Ecclesiastica" is also in print, and, perhaps, one or two others‡. There are numerous manuscript copies of his works in the British Museum, the archbishop's library at Lambeth, and in the public libraries of Oxford and Cambridge.

Of all the works above specified, such as relate to Wales are more immediately connected with the present occasion. These, notwithstanding that they partake of the faults, common to the writings of Giraldus, especially in the adoption of legend and fable, embrace a variety of curious and interesting information; and it may be of importance, with

* This was written at Rome, at the desire of the Pope, and contained, probably, his invectives against the monks.

† This was also a fulmination against the monks; and he tells us, that it was the child of his resentment, "quod sola peperit indignatio."

‡ But the greatest honour, that has been done by the typographical art to the memory of Giraldus, is the valuable translation of his Cambrian Itinerary, by Sir R. C. Hoare, Bart., in two splendid quarto volumes, adorned with some excellent plates. It is also accompanied by many illustrative annotations, of an interesting nature, as well as by an extended memoir of Giraldus, to which the present notice is considerably indebted.

respect to the value of this, to add, that the writer appears to have been well versed in the vernacular language of the country*. It was, indeed, his native tongue; and it is not to be supposed, that a person, possessing his thirst for knowledge, would have remained in ignorance of it.

To sum up, in a few words, the fame of Giraldus, whether we regard him as a man or an author, whether with reference to his general or particular reputation, he must ever be numbered among those individuals who have conferred an honour on the times in which they lived, and whose merit ought to be recognized by posterity.

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* Had he not possessed this knowledge, he could not have explained the discourses of Archbishop Baldwin, to the Welsh peasantry, as he tells us he did, during his tour through the country, in company with that prelate. With respect to the errors in Welsh orthography, that disfigure his writings, they may reasonably be imputed to the carelessness, or ignorance, of transcribers.

LLYWELYN AB GRUFFYDD.

In the whole history of Wales there is no portion of deeper interest than that, which records the final subjugation of the country by England. Whatever political benefits may since have resulted from this event,—and that many have, it would be vain to deny,—the Welsh patriot may still be excused, if he should occasionally revert with regret to that period, when his native land ceased to be numbered among independent nations. Nor is there any circumstance more likely to excite in him this feeling, than a reflection upon the sturdy and untameable valour, with which his ancestors so long maintained the unequal struggle in defence of their liberties*. Although we of these times are enabled, by experience, to appreciate the advantages that have followed the unsuccessful issue of their exertions, it must have been impossible for them, without the gift of prophecy, to conceive, that any thing but misfortune and disgrace would ensue from their subjection to their powerful and inveterate enemy. The ambitious spirit evinced by the English monarchs in their protracted warfare with Wales, and particularly the repeated discomfiture of their most formidable

* If we reckon this struggle to have continued, as it almost did, from the final departure of the Romans, in 446, to the conquest of Wales by Edward, in 1282, we shall find that it lasted during a period of 836 years. In this calculation the inhabitants of Wales are necessarily regarded as the legitimate descendants of the ancient Britons, or Cymry, by whom the Saxons, and other foreign tribes, from their first invasion of the island, were so resolutely opposed.

attacks, could only, on the eventual conquest of the country, have given birth to the most ominous apprehensions. The conquered could have little to anticipate but an exposure to those calamities, which have too often accompanied the vindictive triumph of long-foiled ambition. We cannot, then, be surprised at the resolute courage with which they rallied around the standard of their independence, or that, even at this remote period, a reflection on their patriotic perseverance should awaken, in some breasts, the emotions of sympathy and regret.

But it is not merely the valorous spirit, with which the Welsh asserted their freedom, that communicates to the era of its extinction a particular interest. The fall of a nation, celebrated only for its warlike achievements, might not be the object of much lamentation; but the courageous resistance of the Welsh was associated with circumstances, that have peculiar claims on our sympathy. The simple and unsophisticated manners of the people, the virtues of hospitality by which they were distinguished, and an enthusiastic fondness for their national music, bear sufficient testimony to the general amiableness of their character. With these qualities they united an ardent love of liberty, and a contented attachment to their native hills, which ought to have secured them from the designs of ambition. Such are, briefly, the peculiarities* that confer an interesting celebrity on the epoch to which the ensuing memoir relates; and the individual, whose life it records, was avow-

* The reader will perceive that the favourable traits alone of the ancient Welsh character are here specified. That it had also its dark shades, it would be absurd to deny; but they were, by no means, of so deep a hue as to neutralize the brighter tints above noticed. A restless spirit of discord, so often adverted to in the foregoing pages, was, perhaps, the most prominent blemish in the national portrait.

edly the most conspicuous character in the political drama, that was then acted.

Llywelyn ab Gruffydd, so called to distinguish him from several other Welsh chieftains of the same name, was the last of Welsh descent that bore sway in the Principality. His father, Gruffydd, was the illegitimate son of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, and could not, therefore, bequeath to his offspring any natural right to the sovereignty*. Nor does it appear, that Llywelyn entertained any hope of this distinction before the circumstances of the times conferred it upon him. During the reign of his uncle David† he seems to have spent a life of retirement at a place called Maesmynan, in the county of Flint, in the quiet enjoyment of some possessions that he had inherited from his father‡. Upon the death of Prince David, in 1246, Llywelyn and his brother Owain were unexpectedly elected princes of North Wales, to the exclusion of Sir Ralph Mortimer, who, as having married Gwladus, the only daughter of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, was legal heir to the throne. But his foreign extraction made him, naturally, an object of jealousy, and especially, as, by his marriage, he had become so nearly allied to the English crown§.

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* Gruffydd was killed, a few years before Llywelyn's election to the sovereignty, by a fall in attempting to escape from the Tower of London, where he was in confinement as one of the hostages sent by his brother, David, to Henry III.

† David was the only legitimate son of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth. He held the sovereignty of North Wales from 1238 to 1246.

‡ These were the hundreds of Englefield, Dyfryn Clwyd, Rhos, and Rhyvoniog, in the counties of Flint and Denbigh, comprising the maritime country between Chester and Conway.

§ Joan, the wife of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, and mother of Gwladus, was sister to Henry III. Consequently Sir Ralph Mortimer became, by his marriage, nephew-in-law to the king.

death rather than submit any longer to the arbitrary dominion of the English. The spirit, thus manifested by these Welsh nobles, harmonized so well with the policy of Llywelyn, that he promised to afford them all the aid in his power towards the redress of their grievances, and by which he hoped, at the same time, to rid himself of intruders so dangerous to the security of his throne. Nor was he tardy in the execution of his design; for, having raised a considerable force, he, in the space of a single week, recovered from the enemy all the conquests they had made, during the late reigns, in the interior of North Wales, as well as in the counties of Merioneth and Cardigan, a considerable portion of which had been seized by Prince Edward. The prompt and decisive advantage, thus gained by Llywelyn, was followed by other successes against some of the native chiefs, who had taken part with the enemy, and particularly, in the next year, by a signal triumph over Gruffydd ab Gwenwynwyn, lord of Powys, who had been distinguished by the extent and activity of his treason. Nearly the whole of his territory was seized by Llywelyn, who divided it, with most of the other conquered lands, amongst such of his followers as were most remarkable for their fidelity, thus giving an instance, at once, of his disinterestedness and his policy*.

Llywelyn might be supposed, by these successes against his foreign and domestic enemies, to have ensured, for a time at least, the repose of his dominions. But the treachery, that had been so recently foiled in its open attempts, was still in secret operation against him. Rhys

* The only portion of all his conquests, which he reserved for himself, was an estate that had belonged to Sir Roger Mortimer. Among the chieftains, whom he thus rewarded, was Meredydd ab Rhys, on whom he bestowed the lordship of Buallt; and his liberality to the father was subsequently requited by the treachery of the son.

Vychan, one of the apostate chiefs who had thus suffered*, had immediate recourse to Henry III., whose powerful assistance he implored towards recovering his possessions. The king, having also his own losses to retrieve, made no hesitation in acceding to this request. He, accordingly, dispatched a large force into South Wales, where, after having laid an unsuccessful siege to the castle of Dinewwr, it was met by Llywelyn. The encounter between the two armies was of a bloody and obstinate character, but was eventually decided in favour of the Welsh, whose opponents made a precipitate retreat, with the loss of more than two thousand men on the field of battle, besides several individuals of rank that remained captives in the hands of the victors. The Welsh prince, while on his triumphant return to North Wales, laid waste a great portion of the country through which he passed, as belonging, most probably, either to the English settlers or to the rebel Welsh chieftains. Although these excesses may not have been entirely justifiable, it must not be forgotten that they were committed in the elation of victory, as well as under the influence of circumstances peculiarly irritating.

Upon Llywelyn's arrival in North Wales, he received numerous complaints of the oppressive conduct of Prince Edward's lieutenant*, who had the superintendence of the territory lately ceded to Henry by the treaty between him and Llywelyn. Exasperated by this information, and retaining, most probably, an acute sense of the humiliation he had suffered in surrendering his paternal estate, the Welsh prince determined at once to avenge his own wrongs

* He was lord of Buallt, in the county of Brecon, and had, but a few years before, been opposed to the English.

† Geoffrey de Langley.

and those of his subjects. With this view, he advanced, with a powerful army, towards Chester, ravaging the whole country as far as the gates of the city. Edward felt himself wholly unprepared to repel an assault so vigorous and unexpected. He accordingly applied for assistance to his uncle, the king of the Romans, from whom he received considerable supplies both of men and money; but even these did not enable him to take the field against Llywelyn, who, as we learn from the Welsh historians, had, on this occasion, under his command, "ten thousand armed men, every one sworn to die in the field (if need required) in defence of his country*." Treason, however, was still in activity against the Welsh chief; for we find Gruffydd ab Madog, lord of Dinas Bran, joining the hostile league against his prince and his native land.

Yet, notwithstanding this accession of force, Edward was still unequal to any immediate operations, and Llywelyn, having no employment for his troops in this quarter, once more turned his arms against the English possessions in South Wales. After some partial successes, he made an incursion into the territory of Gruffydd ab Madog, upon which he took ample revenge for the treacherous conduct of its proprietor. On his return home he was suddenly met by Prince Edward, whom, however, he compelled to retreat with precipitation and dishonour. This seems to have been the first occasion, on which Llywelyn and Edward were personally opposed; and, being both young and nearly perhaps of an age†, the spirit of emulation must have been keenly felt on both sides. It is hardly then

* See H. Llwyd's "Historie of Cambria," p. 321.

† Edward was at this time (1257) about eighteen, Llywelyn may have been a few years older.

to be doubted, that the repulse experienced on this occasion by Edward, united with his sense of the hatred which the Welsh had contracted towards him*, was not only productive of present mortification, but laid the foundation of that implacable animosity, with which he afterwards pursued the rival, over whose fortunes he was destined to triumph.

A strong remonstrance from the kings of England and Scotland was, about this period, made to Llywelyn on the subject of his hostile proceedings, but to which he paid so little attention, that he immediately renewed his operations against the domains of Prince Edward, with a force of three thousand infantry, and one thousand horse, well armed and appointed. With these, divided into two detachments, he again invaded the English frontier in the vicinity of Chester, exposing it to all the horrors of spoliation and pillage†. Edward, who was still unable to stem

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* Although this hatred had its origin, principally, in the oppressive conduct already noticed on the part of Edward and his dependants, it should be attributed also, in some degree, to the attempts that were made to impose the English jurisdiction on that part of Wales, which was under Edward's immediate controul. These impolitic measures excited the popular indignation against the English in a remarkable manner.

† Warrington, in his "History of Wales," a work distinguished by its general accuracy, seems to have been greatly misled in his estimate of Llywelyn's force upon this occasion. He represents it as having consisted of "two bodies of 30,000 foot, and 500 horse each, covered with armour." The account of Matthew of Westminster, however, who has been followed in this instance by H. Llwyd, is far more conformable with the circumstances of the times, and the nature of Llywelyn's resources. What he says is, that the army was divided "into two battles, in every of the which there were 1,500 footmen, and 500 horsemen well appointed." See "Historie of Cambria," p. 322. And it will be allowed, that even this latter number of "well-appointed" troops was considerable for the Welsh in that age.

the torrent that thus rolled against him, applied for succour to Ireland; but Llywelyn, being apprised of the circumstance, sent out some vessels, which defeated the Irish squadron off the coast of Anglesey, and thus intercepted the expected supplies.

This succession of disasters and defeats could not fail in having the most exasperating effect on the temper of Henry and his ambitious son. Accordingly, with the design of avenging themselves fully on the Welsh prince, they summoned their military vassals, agreeably with the custom of the times, from St. Michael's Mount to the Tweed, and marched directly for North Wales. Llywelyn does not appear to have offered any immediate resistance to this movement. Conscious, perhaps, of the danger of risking a general engagement where the enemy must have been so superior in numbers, and anticipating the route of the English, he laid siege to the Castle of Diganwy, on the Conway. Henry's army arrived, however, in time to defeat this attempt, and to compel the Welsh forces to retreat. Llywelyn, on this occasion, with his accustomed caution, took refuge among the strong holds of Snowdon, having first destroyed all the resources which could be of use to the enemy. Henry, thus baffled by the policy, as he had before been by the valour, of his antagonist, was driven to the mortifying necessity of retreating to Chester, to secure such remains of his army, as had escaped the ravages of famine and fatigue.

Notwithstanding Llywelyn had thus far foiled the designs of the English, he does not appear to have been anxious for the continuance of hostilities, even when they might have been pursued with a fair chance of success, but, availing himself of what he considered a favourable opportunity, he made offers of peace to Henry. These,

however, were rejected with indignation, owing, perhaps, to Prince Edward's deep-rooted enmity. The *eternum sub pectore vulnus*, which influenced his conduct in this respect, was not to be healed, as subsequently appeared, by any thing short of the complete subjugation of the country; and, however sincere Llywelyn may, at any time, have been in his conciliatory proposals, he could attain no happier fate than to snatch from the political convulsions of his country a precarious enjoyment of that independence, which he wished, it is probable, to secure on the stable grounds of public peace and tranquillity.

Nothing now remained for the Welsh prince but to prosecute the war with vigour, and to cause Henry and his son, since they would not receive him as a friend, at least to respect him as an enemy. Acting perhaps from these motives, he entered Powys, at that time under the influence of England, and, after chastising the rebellious conduct of Gruffydd ab Gwenwynwyn, prince of that province*, and, exacting the submission of Gruffydd ab Madog, he extended his march into Herefordshire, the territory of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, whom he defeated in a general battle; and a great part of the country, with all the principal fortresses, became the fruits of the victory. These successes brought Henry once more into the field;

* According to the laws of Hywel Dda, the Prince of North Wales, or Gwynedd, had a paramount authority over the princes of the other two divisions of Wales, who were tributary to him. Consequently Gruffydd ab Gwenwynwyn, as Prince of Powys, owed Llywelyn the duties of allegiance; and the more so as, at the period to which this note has reference, the three territories, into which Wales was anciently divided, with the exception perhaps of Gwynedd, no longer preserved their former importance. They were subdivided into various petty lordships, over all of which Llywelyn enjoyed, or at least assumed, the nominal sovereignty. See p. 99, *supra*.

but, notwithstanding some reinforcements he had obtained from Ireland and France, he was obliged to limit his enterprise to the destruction of some standing corn in the neighbourhood of the Marches. It does not appear, however, that Llywelyn was opposed in person to him on this occasion, or that he was engaged in the skirmishes, which took place, about the same period, with some foreign mercenaries under the command of Lord Audley*.

Soon after these events, probably in the year 1258, a fresh confederacy was formed between the Welsh nobles, who, in the most solemn manner, renewed their vows to defend their country to the last extremity against the ambitious views of the English. Llywelyn, profiting by this favourable spirit, raised a considerable force for the purpose of invading the English possessions in South Wales; and, before he set out, he delivered an animated address to his army, recommending a general reliance on the protection of Providence, and urging them, in an energy of language inspired by the solemnity of the occasion, to prefer an honourable death to an inglorious submission. The enthusiasm of the prince was speedily communicated to his followers; and thus auspiciously commenced a campaign, which, however, in its results was far from realizing the flattering prospect. Llywelyn, after subjecting the county of Pembroke, then chiefly in the occupation of English or Flemish settlers, to the devastations common in that age,

* These were some German horsemen, who, by the size of their horses and their novel mode of fighting, overthrew the Welsh without difficulty in their first encounter. But the latter soon learnt by experience if not to rival, at least to evade, the tactics of their assailants, and, having, according to their common practice, seduced the Germans into a defile, took advantage of an ambuscade to be amply revenged for their former defeat.

renewed his proposals for peace. But, Henry appears to have been still unwilling to accede to them; and the negociation terminated in a year's truce.

An opportunity now presented itself to Llywelyn for turning his circumstances to peculiar advantage. He had reduced the greatest part of the Principality under his dominion, and had, at least, suspended the animosity of his foreign enemies. If, at such a juncture, he had directed his efforts towards composing the jealousies, and harmonizing the conflicting interests, of his subjects, he might have laid the basis of his country's prosperity. But it was, perhaps, less his own fault than that of the times, that he did not adopt this liberal system of policy. Instead of profiting by this temporary tranquillity to secure the repose of the future, we find him involved in dissensions with his nobles, whose territories had suffered during the recent hostilities.

However, Llywelyn was still anxious for the preservation of peace, and, after procuring a renewal of the truce in 1259, he made fresh overtures, which it is difficult to reconcile with the spirited resolution he had formed but a year before. He made a proposal to pay Henry sixteen thousand pounds weight of silver*, provided his boon were granted, and his subjects secured in the enjoyment of their customs and privileges with the right of having their legal disputes decided at Chester; but Henry was still inexorable, and all Llywelyn could obtain was the extension of the truce for a third year.

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* He had previously offered four thousand marks to the king, three hundred to his son, and two hundred to the queen, but which Henry is said to have rejected as an inadequate compensation for the injuries committed by the Welsh on his territories.

It is probable enough that the English monarch, in acceding to this extended suspension of hostilities, had only in view to avail himself of a favourable opportunity for again assailing his rival, who, on the other hand, was not a little exasperated by the repeated failure of his pacific designs. Regardless, therefore, of the apparently hollow truce which had just been granted, Llywelyn resolved upon fresh enterprises against the possessions of the English in South Wales, and especially of those chieftains who had been most active in their support of Henry. Among these Sir Roger Mortimer, son of Sir Ralph Mortimer before alluded to, experienced more than any others the severity of the Welsh prince's resentment. All his territory in South Wales was either taken or cruelly ravaged; but during these excesses an incident occurred, which it may be worth while to record. The castle of Maelienydd, in Radnorshire, had been captured and destroyed by Llywelyn: Sir Roger, then elsewhere engaged, hastened to the spot, attended only by a few followers, and, with a romantic bravery, planted himself in the ruins, determining to defend them to the last extremity. The place was, however, soon so vigorously invested by the Welsh, that no hope remained to the besieged. Under these circumstances, Sir Roger requested permission to evacuate his position, which the Welsh prince immediately granted, in consideration of the courage evinced by his adversary, and of his inability to make any farther resistance, being unwilling, say his historians, to triumph over a defenceless enemy. This trait must be regarded as creditable to the memory of Llywelyn, and especially, as being so much at variance with the character of a people, by no means remarkable for their chivalrous sentiments.

For the space of nearly two years Llywelyn continued,

without much opposition, to prosecute his conquests in South Wales, which he at length closed by securing the allegiance of a considerable portion of the population, that had before been inimical to him*. These successes having left him at liberty to renew his hostile projects in other quarters, he invaded the English borders on the side of Shropshire and Cheshire, where he gained many important advantages over the Lords Marchers, as also, in the Earldom of Chester, over Prince Edward himself. Elated, most probably, by this prosperous turn of his affairs, he resolved upon attempting more useful conquests at home. With this view he laid siege to the castles of Diganwy and Diserth, both of which he destroyed. These were two of the strongest fortresses possessed by the English in North Wales. The former, in particular, both from its strength and the peculiarity of its situation, had always been a subject of the most obstinate contests†. The loss of it, therefore, as it weakened the controul of the English over their maritime possessions in this quarter, must at once have mortified the pride, and rekindled the resentment, of Prince Edward, the immediate lord of the territory. He, accordingly, marched against Llywelyn, hoping to avenge his disaster; but his wily adversary had again taken refuge amongst his mountain bulwarks, and Edward found him-

* These were the people of Brecon and the adjacent country, many of them, it is probable, previously under the dominion of Sir Roger Mortimer.

† The castle of Diganwy, or Ganoc, as it was called by the English, stood on two small hills, at no great distance from the shore of the Conway. It must have been an ancient fortress, as we find that Robert de Rhuddlan was slain here by the Welsh in 1088. It was afterwards destroyed by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, but was rebuilt by Randulph, Earl of Chester, in 1210. The year afterwards, King John encamped under its walls. The site of this old fortress is still to be traced in the vestiges of a round tower, and a few foundations of walls between the two hills.

self under the necessity of returning home, if not with disgrace, at least without any particular honour.

If any proof were wanted of the weakness of the English government at this period, it would be found in the length of time, during which Llywelyn's successful career continued without any effectual resistance. The chief cause of this imbecility is, perhaps, to be traced to the character of the English armies, composed, as they then were, of feudal levies and mercenaries, suddenly assembled and as suddenly dispersed, having no interest in common, and, accordingly, actuated by none of those nobler principles, which are essential to military success in any important degree. Hence it was that Llywelyn, notwithstanding the general inferiority of his numbers, was enabled to support the protracted struggle, by means of that better spirit with which his followers appear to have been animated. In one case we see vassals and hirelings leagued to extend the empire of an individual, to whom they had, for the most part, no natural attachment, while, in the other, we behold a band of patriots voluntarily uniting in the protection of their native soil, against the aggressions of an inveterate foe.

But what in no small degree contributed to the promotion of Llywelyn's projects, at the period in question, was the insurrection of Simon de Montford, Earl of Leicester. This nobleman had, in 1261, been entrusted with a formidable body of troops, collected from the northern and midland counties of England, for the purpose of invading the Principality. But, when he might, perhaps, have struck the decisive blow, he treacherously abandoned the enterprise, and turned his arms against his natural sovereign. He afterwards openly espoused the cause of Llywelyn, to whom he afforded essential aid, as well by his successes against Sir Roger Mortimer and other Lords Marchers, as

by his triumph over Prince Edward, whom he kept, for some time, a prisoner in the castle of Hereford.

These proceedings of Montford had the effect of drawing down on the head of Llywelyn, as his supposed or actual confederate, not only the fresh resentment of Henry, but also the thunders of the church, which were indignantly levelled against him. But a general peace suddenly occasioned the dispersion of this menacing tempest; and Llywelyn found himself once more in the enjoyment of a temporary repose. The reverses of Montford induced him, about this period, to seek an asylum with the Welsh prince, on whose gratitude he naturally imagined he had some claim. The ascendancy, which the Earl of Leicester had recently acquired over the fortunes of Henry, caused Llywelyn to seize this event as affording a favourable opportunity for establishing his own interests. So, suffering his gratitude, for the moment, to be controuled by his policy, he promised the protection solicited, as well as his open co-operation, on condition that Montford would, in the royal name, acknowledge the independence of Wales, and give up some important fortresses on the Marches*.

These concessions, as being in a great degree merely nominal, were readily granted, and the earl added to them the offer of his daughter Eleanor's hand; a proposal, which appears to have been peculiarly agreeable to Llywelyn. This treaty between the two chiefs was followed by a more active alliance. Llywelyn invaded the possessions of the English

* There were the castles of Mold, Hawarden, and Montgomery, with the lordships of Ellesmere and Whittington. Of the first castle, here mentioned, see some account in p. 130, *supra*, and to which it may here be added, that it was taken by Gruffydd ab Gwenwynwyn, on the part of the English, in 1263, but two years previous to the time, when its surrender was thus stipulated by Montford.

in Glamorganshire, but without contributing any material aid to the cause of his ally; and the battle of Evesham, so fatal to the aspiring hopes of Montford, soon afterwards dissolved a confederacy, which, for more than two years, had considerably strengthened the interests of the Welsh prince.

Upon the suppression of Montford's rebellion, Henry, as was natural enough, directed his thoughts once more towards Llywelyn, with the desire of being revenged for the part he had recently acted. He had even proceeded so far as to make new preparations for the invasion of Wales, when he was prevented by the mediation of the Pope's legate, at whose instance a peace was concluded between the two princes upon terms of mutual advantage. Among the principal conditions, Llywelyn was to pay twenty-five thousand marks; in consideration of which he was to retain the sovereignty of Wales, and the feudal privileges attached to it. A treaty to this effect was signed at Montgomery in 1267, and received the papal sanction by the hand of his legate*. Thus terminated the hostility that had so long subsisted between Llywelyn and Henry; for, during the remaining five years of that monarch's reign, Llywelyn adhered, with an honourable fidelity, to the terms of the treaty, and enjoyed the benefit of his conduct in the uninterrupted tranquillity that succeeded. But this fallacious calm was only the prelude to that memorable era, in which the national liberties of Wales were to be for ever quenched in the blood of her children.

Edward, who was engaged in the holy wars at the time of his father's death, had not long returned home, before

* The account above given is from Rymer, p. 843-4. Matthew of Westminster says the sum, to be paid by Llywelyn, was 32,000*l.*

he sent a summons to Llywelyn to do homage at his approaching coronation. This order, however, the Welsh prince thought proper to disobey; and, notwithstanding that, during the two following years, five or six mandates, to a similar effect, were sent to him by Edward, he resolutely persisted in his refusal, unless some English nobles of distinction were delivered as hostages for his security. Llywelyn had, indeed, undertaken, by his treaty with Henry, to do homage for the Principality, upon condition that the Welsh lords should remain feudatories to himself only; and, while Henry lived, this condition was strictly observed. Edward, however, animated, no doubt, by his old enmity against the natives of Wales, had thought proper to violate the treaty both in this respect and in some others. For, he had not only made a violent seizure of some Welsh baronies, but had openly countenanced several of Llywelyn's subjects who had revolted against him*. Under such circumstances, the latter was fully justified in refusing to risk his person at the English court without a proper indemnity; for a monarch, who had already shewn his disregard of the solemn engagements of a treaty, might not be very scrupulous in his observance of more ordinary duties. Llywelyn, accordingly, transmitted a memorial to England †, explaining, with firmness and moderation, the

* Among these were his brother David, and Gruffydd ab Gwenwynwyn, Prince of Powys.

† This memorial, which is still preserved, is addressed to the "Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the rest of the Bishops in Convocation." After detailing his various wrongs in the most dispassionate manner, as well as the obvious hazard of his personal attendance in England, Llywelyn thus concludes: "We, therefore, desire your lordships earnestly to weigh the dismal effects, that must happen to the subjects both of England and Wales upon the breach of the Articles of Peace, and that you would be pleased to inform the king of the sad consequences of another war, which

motives that influenced his conduct, and offering, at the same time, to perform the homage required at any place, where his personal safety might be ensured.

This resolute conduct on the part of Llywelyn had the natural effect of exasperating Edward, who was, however, in all probability, rejoiced at the pretext it afforded him for renewing his designs against the independence of Wales. And to the execution of these he received an additional incitement, in the zeal with which he was seconded by his parliament and prelates, at whose suggestion the penalties of outlawry and excommunication were awarded to the alleged contumacy of the Welsh prince, without any regard to the justice of his cause, or the patriotism of his motives.

During the progress of these proceedings, which occupied a period of more than three years, Llywelyn formed the resolution of claiming the hand of Eleanor de Montford, who had been formerly betrothed to him by her father. Eleanor was, at this period, the inmate of a French convent*; and Llywelyn, accordingly, made application to the king of France for her release. This request met with immediate compliance, not only from the king, but likewise from the widow of the late Earl of Leicester; and Eleanor was, in consequence, sent with her brother for the purpose of becoming the bride of Llywelyn. The vessel, however, which bore them, fell unfortunately into the hands of the English, and Eleanor and her brother were made prisoners. They were both conducted to Edward, who felt, it is too

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can in no way be prevented, but by using us according to the conditions of the former peace, which, for our part, we will in no measure transgress. But, if the king will not hearken to your counsel, we hope that you will hold us excused, if the nation be disquieted and troubled thereupon, which, as much as in us lieth, we endeavour to prevent."

* At Montargis.

probable, a secret delight in this unexpected advantage over his enemy, though only to be retained at the expense of his honour. But Edward wanted the chivalrous generosity to part with so rich a prize; and the fair Eleanor was accordingly detained at the English court, where she continued in easy captivity for three years.

This incident was calculated, at once, to wound the pride, and awaken the indignation, of Llywelyn; and his first impulse was to avenge the insult by an immediate appeal to arms. But, upon cooler reflection, he preferred trying previously the effect of negociation. With this view, he made the offer of a large sum for the ransom of Eleanor. But the overture was rejected, unless the money was to be accompanied by a compliance with the arbitrary demand, to which Llywelyn had already refused to accede, and which he still resolved to resist. Even his love, however ardent and sincere, could not bribe him from the duty he owed to his country. There was now, therefore, no alternative but arms; and the mutual exasperation of both princes was likely to communicate to the approaching contest a character of peculiar obstinacy.

But, appearances were deceitful. Edward at the head of a numerous body of vassals, who had assembled at Worcester, entered North Wales in the summer of 1277; and such were the superiority of his numbers and the celerity of his movement, or the want of preparation on the part of his antagonist, that the latter was compelled, without a battle, to take refuge among the inaccessible defences of Snowdon, and that, unluckily, without having made any provision for such an emergency. The isle of Anglesey, too, was in the hands of the English, so that Llywelyn, who, perhaps, had depended on that quarter for supplies, was deprived of hi usual resource. In addition to this, there had been a ge-

neral defection amongst the chieftains of South Wales, which destroyed the hope of any effective co-operation from thence. In this extremity, urged by the sufferings of his famishing soldiers, and without any chance of relief, the Welsh prince was under the mortifying necessity of offering to capitulate. Some tender recollections, also, with respect to his beloved Eleanor, may, at length, have had their share in contributing to this unfavourable result.

Edward, upon receiving these overtures, refused to listen to any terms, that were not founded in an unconditional surrender on the part of Llywelyn, who was to be indebted to the clemency of his conqueror for any indulgence he might receive. Arbitrary and humiliating as this proposal was, the Welsh prince did not feel himself in a condition to reject it. A treaty was accordingly concluded on this basis; and such was the severity of the terms, that it is difficult to conceive how a prince, of such acknowledged valour and spirit as Llywelyn, could have been forced, by any circumstances, to submit to them. He was not only to do homage annually in London, as had been formerly stipulated, but he was to deliver up all his prisoners, to restore all forfeited lands, to grant annuities to his rebellious brothers *, to resign the feudal supremacy over his barons, to pay a tribute of fifty thousand marks †, and even to surrender to Edward a considerable portion of his dominions ‡,

* These were Rhodri and David, to the former of whom he was to pay an annuity of 1000 marks, and to the latter, one of 500. Besides this, he was to reinstate his brother Owain in the lands which his treason had forfeited.

† Llywelyn, however, was afterwards exonerated from the payment of this sum, as well as from a yearly tribute which he had undertaken to pay for Anglesey.

‡ The portion, thus surrendered, comprised the four hundreds before men-

while ten of the most considerable Welsh chieftains were to become hostages for the due observance of this degrading convention. Such form a part only of the conditions, which the generous clemency of Edward imposed on his unfortunate adversary; but it is scarcely to be doubted, that the present triumph of the English monarch was rendered more insolent by a remembrance of his past defeats. In return for the sacrifices thus exacted from Llywelyn, certain concessions were made to his subjects, which related chiefly to the administration of justice according to the forms usual in Wales, and to the enjoyment of their ancient customs and privileges.

In compliance with the terms of this treaty, Llywelyn accompanied the king to London, for the purpose of performing the stipulated homage. He was attended on the occasion by several Welshmen of distinction with their retinues. The language and manners of the party appear to have been a subject of much merriment or derision to the English; a circumstance, which, considering the irascible temper of the Welsh, could not have had a very conciliatory effect*. Its result was, indeed, quite of an opposite nature; yet, whatever may have been Llywelyn's particular feelings, he chose to disguise them for the present, with the view, as it would appear, of securing an object, which, at this juncture, must have engrossed his chief thoughts. This was his marriage with Eleanor de Montford, who still

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tioned in the course of this memoir. See p. 175, *supra*. In addition to this sacrifice, all the Welsh chieftains, except the five barons of Snowdon, were to hold their lands under the English crown.

* The Welshmen, that accompanied Llywelyn on this occasion, were lodged in the village of Islington, where, from the strangeness of their habits and customs, they were exposed to many mortifications. Llywelyn himself, it may be presumed, had apartments nearer the court.

continued in honourable captivity at the English court. And there can be little doubt that the same motive must have had an important influence on the Welsh prince in his assent to the humiliating treaty he had recently concluded.

Soon after Llywelyn's return to Wales from the English metropolis, he received a somewhat imperative order from Edward to meet him at Worcester. This injunction, at any other season, the Welsh prince might have hesitated to obey; but, on the present occasion, the private reason already noticed left him no choice. He hastened to the presence of the king, and, whatever mortification he may have endured, he considered himself perhaps amply remunerated by being put in possession of the hand of his betrothed bride. The marriage took place on the 13th of October, 1278, in the presence of Edward and his queen, but not before the former, with his usual policy, had made the occasion a pretext for exacting some new submissions from the Welsh prince. He extorted from him a promise, on the very eve of the nuptial solemnity, not to afford protection to any one that might have incurred the displeasure of the English crown. As soon as Llywelyn had secured the possession of his bride, he departed with her in haste to Wales, probably to his house at Aber, near Conway, where, about this time, he generally resided.

For the two years succeeding, the Welsh prince appears to have resigned himself entirely to the enjoyment of his conjugal felicity, and might thus have consumed the remainder of his days, but for the calamity he sustained in the death of his wife, which took place in 1280*. This

* The only issue of this marriage was one daughter, who, with her cousin, a daughter of David, spent the greatest part of her life in an English convent.—See Rymer, vol. ii. p. 429.

event was, no doubt, the source of much affliction to Llywelyn, and appears to have had an effect of another nature in dissolving all the ties that had bound him to England; and it is probable, that the grief natural to the occasion subsided, only to give place to a revival of the ancient animosity, heightened as it had been by recent events, that existed between the two nations. While Eleanor lived, she had perhaps been able to conciliate his feelings on this subject, if indeed the remembrance of her father's fate and of her own wrongs had predisposed her to such a task. But whatever part she may have acted in this respect, Llywelyn appears to have considered himself, when she was no more, as at once liberated from all restraint. And it is more than probable, that this notion was encouraged by a reflection on the arbitrary conduct pursued towards him by Edward, while his fortunes were, in a certain degree, at that monarch's disposal.

But these were not the only considerations that tended to exasperate Llywelyn. The inhabitants of that part of North Wales, which had been ceded to Edward by the late treaty, had been since exposed not only to many innovations, as impolitic as they were vexatious, but also to a variety of frauds and oppressions. The people, unable and unwilling to submit any longer to such a system of tyranny, united in an appeal to David, Llywelyn's brother, to assist them in the redress of their wrongs. David, who had also been a sufferer from the same cause, at once sympathized with their grievances, and undertook, as far as he could, to avenge them; and, as a preliminary measure, he renounced his unnatural allegiance to Edward, and became reconciled to his brother. He likewise engaged several other Welsh chieftains to unite in his cause. Llywelyn, animated by these events, disclaimed all farther submission to the condi-

tions of the late treaty, and seemed determined, by the vigour of his present conduct, to atone for the weakness of his former concessions.

This resolution on the part of the two brothers was followed by a general insurrection, and Llywelyn and David obtained a few trivial advantages over the English in the Marches, and jointly invested the castles of Flint and Rhuddlan. In the mean time, Edward, as may be supposed, was not inactive. On the contrary, he adopted immediate measures for the purpose, as he avowed, of entirely extinguishing that spirit of freedom from which he had experienced so much molestation. With this view he levied large contributions of men and money throughout his dominions*, and, by the formidable extent of his preparations, paid an unwilling tribute to the importance of his antagonist.

Edward, however, lost no time in carrying his designs into execution. He invaded North Wales, according to his usual practice, on the side of Chester, and marched directly against Llywelyn, whom he pursued, as on former occasions, to the vicinity of the Conway. A partial defeat here checked his career, and compelled him to retreat, after having lost some of his principal officers†. This triumph on the part of Llywelyn was but of a temporary nature; for his more powerful adversary was soon in a condition to resume his operations. He again advanced, and arrived unmolested at the castle of Rhuddlan.

* The taxes, that were imposed on this occasion, were not confined to England, but extended also to Ireland.

† Edward lost, according to the most probable statements, fourteen standards and a great number of prisoners in this action. Lords Audley and Clifford were among the slain. The king was obliged in consequence to retreat as far as Hope, on the borders of Flintshire.

While these events were passing, Peckham, archbishop of Canterbury, actuated by a real or affected desire to serve Llywelyn, made an offer of his mediation between him and the king of England. His overtures to Llywelyn combine a singular mixture of admonition and menace, exhorting him on the one hand to a declaration of his grievances, and threatening him, on the other, with the severest penalties, both spiritual and temporal, in the event of his contumacy; alleging at one moment his lively interest in the fortunes of Llywelyn, and consigning him at another to the utmost vengeance of his hostility. To this extraordinary address Llywelyn replied in a tone of manly moderation, representing the injurious infraction of the late treaty on the part of the English, together with his own anxiety for the preservation of peace, as long as it could be maintained without the sacrifice of his own honour or of the security of his subjects, and offering satisfaction for any wrongs committed by the Welsh, provided a correspondent disposition were manifested on the part of their enemies. This temperate answer was accompanied by a specification of the injuries of which the Welsh had to complain*.

Nothing could be more equitable than these propositions; but Edward, conscious of his strength, disdained to treat with his opponent on terms of equality. In answer therefore to the suggestion of the archbishop, who wished him to consider the subject of Llywelyn's complaint, and to allow the Welsh chiefs to plead their cause in his presence, he observed in equivocal terms, that they were at liberty to come and to depart again, if in justice they might. The

* Among the wrongs, urged by Llywelyn, were the murder of religious persons in Wales, the wanton destruction of monasteries and convents, and many unwarrantable exactions committed by the English functionaries throughout the districts, over which they had any control.

archbishop hastened to apprise Llywelyn of the king's answer; but the Welsh prince, aware perhaps of its duplicity, refused to accede to any conditions, that might compromise his conscientious duty towards his subjects, or his respect for the dignity of his own station.

This spirited resolve of Llywelyn was not calculated to bring the negociation to an amicable issue. The pride of the English monarch naturally took the alarm, and he declared his determination to be satisfied with nothing short of an unconditional surrender on the part of the Welsh. The archbishop, however, either of his own accord or with the secret connivance of Edward, made another effort to mediate between him and Llywelyn. But as the terms he proposed to the latter were in the same dictatorial strain, offering mercy on the one hand and threatening vengeance on the other, there was little probability that they could be attended with any success*. They were, on the contrary, rejected by Llywelyn and his countrymen with a bold and indignant spirit, which not only operated with new force on the vindictive designs of Edward, but called down on the head of his adversary the spiritual fulminations of the archbishop, who from this time cast away the mask he had assumed, and became the avowed enemy of Llywelyn.

The Welsh forces, which, under the immediate command of their prince, had remained during these negociations in the vicinity of Snowdon, resolved, with a Spartan fortitude, to

* There were three propositions made in this instance by the archbishop: one of a public nature, and two others addressed in private to Llywelyn and David respectively. The public proposal related chiefly to the unconditional capitulation of Llywelyn and his nobles, and the private ones suggested the surrender of Snowdon on the part of Llywelyn, in exchange for an English county, and, with reference to David, proposed his future residence in the Holy Land, during the king's pleasure. The Bishop of St. David's was the bearer of these generous conditions.

defend to the utmost point this last asylum of their national liberties. Edward, who had been altogether at Rhuddlan, upon the final rejection of his proposals, marched towards the enemy, having first dispatched a part of his army by sea to take possession of Anglesey. This was effected without much opposition, though not without considerable bloodshed on the part of the natives, who became the unoffending victims of English revenge. Edward, by this exploit, hoped to take Llywelyn by surprise, by assailing him from a quarter against which he might not be prepared. With this view the English troops crossed the Menai by a bridge of boats, and landed at Moel-y-Don in the neighbourhood of Bangor. Llywelyn was aware of the movement, but made no opposition to it until the reflux of the tide had intercepted the communication with the boats. At this moment the Welsh forces, which had hitherto been unperceived by the enemy, rushed from their mountain ambuscade, and assailed the English with so sudden an impetuosity, that nearly the whole of their number fell by the sword or perished in the wave*.

This disaster paralyzed for a moment the operations of the English monarch, and elevated in proportion the spirits and hopes of his rival. Llywelyn, indeed, in the elation of success, regarded his triumph as almost complete. Although still confined to his mountain fastnesses, he was abundantly supplied with provisions; and, as the year was far advanced, he relied upon the certain retreat of the English in the course of a short time; and the superstitious notions of his followers, who applied to their situation some

* Latimer, the commander, is said to have been the only one that survived this disaster. The loss of the English comprised fifteen knights, thirty-two esquires, and about a thousand private soldiers. Among the slain were some individuals of the first distinction.

pretended predictions of Merlin, served to inspire a general confidence. Such was the deceitful gleam that irradiated the evening of Welsh independence. The lingering light was as yet above the horizon; but the tempest was at hand, in which it was to be for ever obscured.

The period we have just been considering was obviously the crisis of Llywelyn's fate; and, had he evinced during it any of that prudent caution for which he had been remarkable on former occasions, he might have ensured for some years a peaceable and prosperous reign. But seduced by his recent success, he resolved upon tempting his fortune still farther; and this resolution was the cause of his ruin.

Edward, it has just been seen, had been unexpectedly baffled in his expedition against North Wales; and it will afford us some idea of the extent of his disaster to learn, that he found it necessary to raise fresh levies throughout his dominions for the purpose of supplying his losses. While these preparations were going on, the king appears to have retired from the advanced post he occupied in the direction of Snowdon; and Llywelyn, profiting by the circumstance, set out in an evil hour with a part of his forces for South Wales, with the intention of encountering the English in that quarter. The mountainous position he had thus imprudently quitted was entrusted to the defence of his brother David.

Soon after Llywelyn had reached Cardiganshire, he gained some partial advantages over one of the apostate chiefs of that country*. However, the English were in much greater strength than he appears to have anticipated, and their troops were reinforced after his arrival. His

* This was Rhys ab Meredydd, who, during most of Llywelyn's wars, had espoused the cause of his enemies. This renegade chieftain was the son of Meredydd ab Rhys, mentioned in page 178.

prospect of any important advantages, therefore, as far as they depended on his own immediate resources, could not have been favourable. His force it is probable was not great, and in a country, so tainted by disaffection, he could have had but little chance of augmenting it.

Under these circumstances he seems to have considered it advisable to hold a consultation with some of the native chieftains, whom he supposed to be in his interest, and accordingly proceeded towards Buallt* for the purpose. He had previously posted the main body of his troops on an adjacent eminence, and had stationed a detachment at a bridge called Pont Orewyn, for the purpose of protecting the passage of the Wye at that place. According to the most authentic accounts that have reached us, Llywelyn himself remained, during this period, in a neighbouring wood, in expectation of some chiefs of the country, who had made an engagement to meet him there. But, if this was the case, it appears certain that Llywelyn was disappointed in the expected interview, even if he was not the victim of treachery, as there is some ground for supposing. However, while he remained in this state of inactive seclusion, the enemy had succeeded in crossing the Wye. The party at the bridge had indeed courageously maintained their post until they were assailed in the rear by a detachment of the English, which had unexpectedly forded the river. Llywelyn, too confident in the strength of his troops, or not sufficiently apprised of the force of the enemy, neglected to rescue himself, while yet he might, from his perilous situation. And, as he was thus reposing in a fatal security, a body of the English horse suddenly surrounded the wood in which he was. At length, aware of his danger, he made an effort to rejoin his forces; but all attempts to

* Now corruptly called Builth.

evade his impending doom were now unavailing. One Adam de Francton, a private soldier, as it would appear, in the English army, plunged his spear into the body of the unarmed and defenceless Llywelyn, in total ignorance, as it is said, of the quality of his victim*.

The wound which Llywelyn had received, although mortal, did not immediately terminate his existence. The dying warrior had strength enough left to solicit the last consolations of religion; and, in compliance with his wish, he was attended by a friar from an adjacent monastery. The English having soon afterwards defeated the Welsh, who must have been naturally dispirited both by the inferiority of their numbers and the absence of their prince, Adam de Francton returned to the spot where now lay the bleeding corpse of Llywelyn. He proceeded to plunder the body, and, while in this act, he suddenly discovered the rank of the deceased, by means of some private papers and other articles found in his possession. Elated with the idea of the triumph he had thus achieved, he severed the prince's head from his body, and dispatched it to Edward, who was at that time at Conway.

The king is said to have received the bleeding trophy with a barbarous exultation unworthy not only of a magnanimous prince, but also, it may be admitted, of the general tenour even of Edward's character†. That he should rejoice in the fall of a formidable enemy, however distin-

* This can hardly be reconciled with the popular notion, that Llywelyn was waylaid by the treachery of his countrymen, as in that case he must, in all probability, have been known to Francton. However, the subject is now involved in too much obscurity to justify any hope of ascertaining the truth. It appears certain, however, that the death of Llywelyn happened at the place and in the manner here mentioned.

† Powell, in his edition of Llwyd's "Historie of Cambria," says, that when Llywelyn's head was sent to the king, "he received it with great joy."

guished by his valour, was by no means unnatural; but the insult offered to his mangled remains must have been the result of Edward's experience in the school of Saracen cruelty. In order to render this insult complete, he sent the Welsh prince's head to London, where it was exhibited in a pillory, decorated, in savage derision of one of Merlin's predictions, with a silver wreath, to typify the crown it was to have worn. It was afterwards carried through the streets on a spear, and ultimately placed on the Tower of London.

Nor were these the only indignities offered to the memory of Llywelyn. The Archbishop of Canterbury, as if infected by the vindictive spirit of his sovereign, withheld for some time the spiritual panacea of absolution, which, in that age of papal bigotry, could alone, under the circumstances, entitle the body to Christian burial. However, upon his being afterwards apprised of the penitence evinced by Llywelyn in his last moments, the holy boon was conceded, and the remains of the prince were consigned to the tomb, as is conjectured, in the parish of Llanganten near Buallt, at a place which still seems to preserve in its name a record of the transaction*.

Thus, in the year 1282, after a reign of twenty-eight years, perished the last native prince of the Cymry, whose name as an independent people was henceforth to be erased from the annals of nations. In reverting to the character of Llywelyn, we find it combining an union of qualities apparently irreconcileable. In his public capacity he appears to have generally inclined to the cultivation of peace, as was manifest on several occasions, and more particularly in the many pacific overtures he made to Henry III. at a time when he was far from being driven to such an alternative

* This is *Cwm Llywelyn*, in the parish above mentioned, where is a spot called to this day *Cwm y Bedd* or *Cwm Bedd Llywelyn*.

by the extremity of his fortunes. But on the other hand, his reign presents a series of struggles, which appear, upon a superficial view, to have been the result of a restless and turbulent spirit, impatient of controul, and delighting only in scenes of confusion and blood. This conclusion, however, is to be drawn rather from the circumstances of the times than from the character of the man. For it seems to have been altogether his aim, as it was obviously his interest, to preserve the tranquillity of his dominions as long as that could be done without compromising his own honour or the national independence. In his treaty with Edward, indeed, he appears even to have forgotten for a moment these paramount objects, in his desire for the restoration of peace; but this was the effect of peculiar and uncontroulable events, and we find him availing himself of the first favourable opportunity to repair the error he had perhaps involuntarily committed.

And such opportunities were too easily found; for it rarely happened, during the reigns of Henry III. and his aspiring son, that the terms of any convention between the English and Welsh were long observed by the former. The Welsh appear to have been treated as a rebellious people long before the rights of conquest had given the English monarchs any claim to their allegiance; and the intervals of public hostility were too often used by the latter for purposes of private oppression. In such a state of things a spirit of reciprocal enmity was naturally engendered between the two countries; and, if Llywelyn partook of the national feeling in this respect, the circumstances in which it originated render it no reproach to his memory. It is sufficient for his fame, that he was never deaf to the call of his countrymen, when implored to protect them from insolence or persecution, and that, during a period of nearly thirty years, he was the patriotic champion of their

independence against the united assaults of foreign hostility and domestic treason. In his military capacity he generally conducted himself with valour and caution; and, had his life been prolonged, he would, it is probable, have ensured by a prudent administration the happiness and prosperity of his country.

In his private character Llywelyn appears to have possessed a humane and generous disposition, and not to have permitted the convulsions of the times to hurry him into the commission of any wanton excesses. From the lavish terms of praise, in which he is commemorated by several contemporary bards, we may infer that he was a friend to the national muse*; and indeed it is traditionally related, that his social hours at Aber were often dedicated to her service†. In a word, whether as a prince or a man, Llyw-

* Among the poets, who have left elegies on his death, are Davydd Benvras, Bleddyn Vardd, and Gruffydd ab yr Ynad Coch. Their productions are to be found in the Archaiology of Wales. It may be proper here to observe, that there seems to be no authentic proof of the indiscriminate massacre of the Welsh bards, traditionally ascribed to Edward I. At least, there is no positive testimony respecting it in the works of the poets that flourished after Edward's reign, who would have been the first to record such a deed of atrocity, if it had been actually perpetrated. It is probable then that the tradition may be indebted chiefly for its currency to Gray's celebrated Ode. That the bards were interdicted by Edward, under severe penalties, from exercising their influence over their countrymen, in opposition to his authority, may reasonably be presumed; but the wholesale murder, with which that monarch is charged, is at variance with his general character and with the manners even of that uncivilized age.

† It is said that, after his defeat of the English at Moel-y-Don, he spent the evening with his friends at Aber, and, in the hilarity of the moment, composed the following *englyn*,—

" Mae'n Don llawer bron, llu'r brenin,—heddyw,
Er hawdded ein chwerthin;
Llawer Sais, leu-bais libin,
Heb air na chwyth, vyth o'i viu."

It may be proper to add, however, that the particular style of writing,

elyn appears to have been distinguished by many talents and virtues; and, with whatever interest we may regard him as the "last of the Cymry," we cannot omit the tribute due to his own personal qualities.

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conspicuous in this stanza, does not seem to have been cultivated at so early a period, or at least not in the perfection here exhibited. It first became common to Welsh prosody about the beginning of the fifteenth century.

DAVYDD AB GWILYM.

Among the consequences, that resulted to Wales from its subjugation by Edward I., none is more remarkable than the discouragement of the national muse. That rich poetical feeling, which, in earlier periods of the Welsh history, had been the delight and pride of the country, seems to have suffered a temporary extinction; and nearly a century elapsed before we find any symptoms of its revival. This phenomenon in the literary annals of a people, proverbially distinguished for their attachment to poetry, is, in part, to be explained by a reference to the jealous policy of their conquerors, who, we may reasonably presume, exerted their utmost power to suppress a spirit, whose influence had been so inimical to their interests*. The clergy, in particular, true to the intolerant principles of the Romish church, had arrayed themselves in determined hostility against the votaries of the *awen*, whose effusions, in more propitious times, had been devoted to the defence of religious and political freedom†; but, above all, the memorable events of this era—the overthrow of the national independence, and the depressed condition of the Welsh chiefs—had paralyzed at once the hopes of the patriot and

* See page 207 *supra* for a note upon this subject.

† This is more particularly true respecting the principles of the old Bardic Institution, which encouraged a liberality of sentiment in all matters submitted to the inquiry of its members; and it is by no means improbable, that the early poets, especially before the time of the Conquest, inherited much of this characteristic feeling.

the energies of the bard. The only themes, that remained to the dispirited child of song, were those of regret and despair, and, rather than awaken with unavailing skill the "deep sorrows of his lyre," he chose to remain for ever mute. Like the disconsolate sons of Judah by the "waters of Babylon," he hung up the useless instrument, and sat down to weep over the fall of his country*.

Such are the causes that conspired, during the ominous interval under consideration, to quench the ardour of poetical genius among the natives of Wales; and, upon the re-appearance of this intellectual light, about the middle of the fourteenth century, we find its characteristics essentially changed. Both in sentiment and style the *awen* of Wales had now undergone a complete revolution. The heroism, which in brighter days had sustained the national independence, no longer called forth the loftier strains of the muse. The bard was now content to tune his harp to the humbler themes that life supplies in its more private walks; and a system of poetry, of a tamer structure than was formerly known, was introduced to correspond with this important innovation. But, whatever merit the Welsh muse may thus have lost in point of fire and sublimity, it appears to have been, in some respect, compensated by the humour and vivacity which became afterwards its most prominent features †.

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* See the sublime and pathetic description given by the Royal Psalmist (Ps. cxxxvii.), of the affecting incident here alluded to.

† It was about the year 1350, that the spirit of poetry revived, in Wales, from the trance into which it seems to have fallen upon the Conquest. From that epoch to the close of the century, there flourished several poets of considerable genius, the cotemporaries of Davydd ab Gwilym. The names of more than sixty have been preserved, together with some of their effusions.

The dawn of the epoch here noticed was signalized by the birth of Davydd ab Gwilym, on whom the appellation of the Petrarch of Wales has, with much propriety, been bestowed*. Cardiganshire has the honour of being the place of our poet's nativity: he first saw the light, about the year 1340, at a place called Bro Gynin, in the parish of Llanbadarn Vawr in that county†. By his paternal ancestry, however, he belongs to the other division of the Principality, as his father, Gwilym Gam, was a descendant of Llywarch ab Brân, head of one of the fifteen tribes of North Wales, and related by marriage to Owain Gwynedd‡. The poet's mother was Ardudvul, sister of Llywelyn ab Gwilym Vychan, lord of Cardigan, and a person of some importance in that part of the country.

Yet, whatever may have been Davydd ab Gwilym's pretensions to an illustrious descent, there is reason to believe that his birth was illegitimate, or, at least, that the union of his parents, if it had been previously sanctioned by legal

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* It may be proper to mention here, that the ensuing part of this memoir is chiefly borrowed from the life of Davydd ab Gwilym, by the same author, that appeared in the third volume of the *Cambro-Briton*. It is, however, in its present form much enlarged. It should likewise be stated that the writer is considerably indebted to the interesting biographical notice, from the pen of Dr. Owen Pughe, prefixed to the edition of this poet's works, published in 1789.

† Davydd ab Gwilym adds one to the many instances of persons of genius whose birth-place has been a subject of contest; for Anglesey has divided the claim to this honour with the county of Cardigan. The poet's works, however, in which he alludes to his native land, under the name of *Bro Cadell*, or the Country of Cadell, seems to place the matter beyond dispute, even if there were no other testimony; for, upon the partition of Wales by Rhodri Mawr, or Roderic the Great, in 876, his eldest son, Cadell, came into possession of South Wales.

‡ Owain Gwynedd and he married two sisters, the daughters of Goronw ab Owain, lord of Tegaingl.

rites, had not received the countenance of their friends. At no distant period, however, a reconciliation must have been effected, as the embryo bard was taken in his infancy under the protection of his uncle, Llywelyn ab Gwilym, who is related to have been a man of some parts. He accordingly became his nephew's tutor, and seems to have discovered in him the early indications of that particular talent, for which he was afterwards so conspicuous, and in the cultivation of which Llywelyn afforded his young pupil all the encouragement and assistance in his power.

About the age of fifteen Davydd ab Gwilym returned to his paternal home, where, however, he resided but a short time, owing, as it would appear, to the unpleasant bickerings that took place between him and his parents, in consequence of his satirical propensities, which, even at that early age, he could not restrain. Some of his effusions, written during this period, have been preserved; and, whatever ingenuity they may evince considering the years of the writer, they are by no means indicative of his filial affection. These domestic altercations caused the young bard once more to be separated from his natural guardians; and we accordingly find him, at an early age, enjoying, at Maesaleg in Monmouthshire, the friendship and patronage of Ivor Hael, a near relative of his father*.

* Ivor Hael was, by both parents, of a noble lineage: by his mother's side he was descended from Rhys ab Tewdwr, whose life has been recorded in these pages. He was the owner of several houses in South Wales, and of which the old mansion of Gwenallt in Monmouthshire was lately, if it be not still, in existence. The house, that was the usual residence of our poet, has long been in ruins. The Rev. Evan Evans, author of *Dissertatio de Bardis*, has made it the theme of his muse in the following couplet:—

"Y llwybrau gynt lle bu'r gân
Yw lleoedd y ddylluan."
Lo! now the moping owlets haunt
Where erst was heard the muse's chaunt.

Ivor

Ivor, deservedly surnamed Hael, or "the Generous," received his young kinsman with an affectionate kindness, which he even carried so far as to appoint him his steward, and the instructor of his only daughter, although Davydd ab Gwilym's qualifications for these duties were not, it is probable, at that time, of the most obvious character. At least, the inconvenient effects of one of these appointments was too soon apparent in the reciprocal attachment that grew up between the poet and his fair charge. The precise nature of Ivor's conduct towards the former on the discovery of this circumstance is not known; but he appears to have treated him with an indulgence, which his own regard for the enamoured tutor could alone explain. He is recorded, however, to have been somewhat severe in the treatment of his daughter, whom he forthwith conveyed to a convent in the island of Anglesey. Thither she was followed by her devoted swain, who, in the humble capacity of a servant at a neighbouring monastery, consoled himself during his hours of disappointed love by offering to his mistress the tributes of his muse, all he had then to bestow. And several poems of considerable beauty are still extant, which he may be supposed to have written during this period. At length, apparently weary as well of this barren enjoyment as of his fruitless fidelity, he returned to the hospitable mansion of his patron; and the welcome manner, in which he seems to have been again received, proves that his affection for the daughter had not produced any serious displeasure on the part of the father, however, from motives of prudence, the latter might have thought it advisable to discountenance the attachment. The young poet seems also at this period to have been reconciled to his pa-

Ivor is numbered among the ancestors of the family of Tredegar, which, for its honourable antiquity, may vie with any in Wales.

rents, between whose house and Maesaleg his time was divided.

During this his second residence with Ivor, Davydd ab Gwilym must in all likelihood have devoted much attention to the cultivation of his favourite pursuit, since we find him, about this period, elected to fill the post of chief bard of Glamorgan, which was then somewhat more than a mere nominal honour. His poetical reputation made him also a welcome, and, in some respects, a necessary guest at the festivals, which in those long-departed days of social cheer and princely hospitality, were common in the houses of the first orders in Wales. The mansions of Ivor Hael and Llywelyn ab Gwilym were the frequent scenes of these festive assemblies, at which particular respect was shewn to the sons of the *awen:* and here it was that Davydd ab Gwilym seems to have had the first opportunity of signalizing himself amongst his bardic compeers, in those poetical contests, formerly so frequent in Wales, and which are not even now wholly disused. It was at Emlyn, the seat of his uncle Llywelyn, that, on one of these occasions, the deep-rooted enmity, which existed between him and a brother bard, named Rhys Meigan, had its origin, and which became the fertile source of the most satirical and even virulent strains on both sides. The laurel in this "war of words" was, however, finally adjudged to the subject of this memoir, whose antagonist is even reported to have fallen dead on the spot, a victim to the unendurable poignancy of our poet's satire. Strange and incredible as this incident may appear, it is, in a great measure, confirmed by one of Davydd ab Gwilym's effusions, in which he alludes, with some minuteness, to the extraordinary occurrence*.

* See "Davydd ab Gwilym's Poems," No. 125, at the conclusion, and also the poem immediately preceding it, by Gruffydd Grug.

Among the particulars of our poet's life, that are traditionally known, or are to be collected from his productions, the most remarkable are those that relate to his attachment to the fair sex, with whom his personal qualifications, united perhaps with the charms of his Muse, seem to have made him an early favourite. And his temper, full of ardour and levity as it was, naturally disposed him to turn the circumstance to every advantage. It cannot, therefore, be considered surprising, that he should have been involved in many adventures of gallantry. Tradition has preserved the memory of one, which, if authentic, proves, at once, the extent of his amours, and the extravagance of his conduct in this respect. The following is a brief detail of this ludicrous incident.

In the number of his mistresses the taste of Davydd ab Gwilym appears to have been quite oriental; as he reckoned no less than four and twenty at one time. Having an inclination, on a particular occasion, to divert himself at their expense, he made an assignation with each, unknown to the rest, to meet him under a certain tree, at a specified hour, having appointed the same time for all. Our poet himself took care to be on the spot before the period of meeting, and, having ascended the tree, he had the satisfaction of finding, that not one of his faithful inamoratas failed in her engagement. When they were all assembled, feelings of inquisitive wonder took place of the gentler emotions, to which, it is probable, they had before yielded; and, when at length the stratagem, of which they had been the dupes, became known, the only sentiment, that inspired the group, was that of indignant vengeance against the unfortunate bard, and which they failed not to vent in reproaches "long and loud." The author of the plot, who, from his ambuscade above, had perceived the gathering

storm, had recourse to his muse for an expedient to allay it, or, at least, to divert its fury from the object to which it was at first directed. Emerging partially from the foliage, in which he had been enveloped, he replied to the menaces of the disappointed fair-ones, which even extended to his life, in an extemporary stanza, of which the following translation will convey some idea, though unequal to the force of the original:

> Among you all, the kindest jade,
> Who oft'nest meets me in this shade
> On summer's morn, to love inclin'd,
> Let her strike first, and I'm resign'd*.

The effect was such as our poet had, perhaps, anticipated. Taunts and recriminations were bandied about by the exasperated assembly, who forgot their common resentment against the bard in this new cause for commotion. The apple of discord had been thrown amongst them; and the spot, so lately dedicated to the queen of love, became suddenly the theatre of an implacable war. The tradition adds, that the contriver of the stratagem had the good fortune to escape unmolested in the confusion of the conflict, being thus indebted to his muse for his protection from a catastrophe of no very agreeable nature.

But, whatever may have been the general failings of Davydd ab Gwilym in his commerce with the softer sex, he appears, in two instances, to have entertained a sincere and honourable passion, the objects of which, under the names of Dyddgu and Morvudd, he has celebrated in some of his

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* The following are the original lines:

> Y hutsin wen vain vwynav—o honoch,
> I honno maddeuav,
> Tan vrig pren, a heulwen hav
> Teg anterth, t'rawed gyntav.

choicest effusions. But in both cases the result was unpropitious, though in different ways, to the hopes he had indulged.

The fair one first named, who is represented by the bard as endowed with the loveliest graces both of body and mind, seems to have proved herself inaccessible to all the overtures of his heart, enforced as they were by all the fascinations of his muse*. However gratified she may have been by the offerings of the bard, she appears to have paid no attention to the adorations of the lover.

Morvudd, our poet's other favourite, received his addresses more graciously; and, had it not been for some untoward circumstances over which she had no control, the event of this attachment might have equalled his happiest anticipations. Morvudd was the daughter of Madog Lawgam, a gentleman of Anglesey, and was, in every point of view, the very Laura of our Cambrian Petrarch. An affection at once warm and sincere seems to have existed between them; and, having failed, it may be surmised, to obtain the consent of her friends to their marriage, they were united clandestinely, and by a ceremony, somewhat irregular, it must be admitted, even for the laxity of that age. In the silence of a grove, accompanied only by one of our poet's friends, who usurped on the occasion the functions of a priest, the fond couple were made one, and continued, for some time, to live together as man and wife on the strength of this union†.

* The poems to Dyddgu, now extant, are seven in number, from No. 14 to 20 inclusive.

† This event is related by the bard himself in a poem, entitled "The Cuckoo's Tale," No. 70, in the following passage: in allusion to Morvudd, he says—

"E'm rhoddes liw tes lw.teg,
Ni chawn gan unverch chwaneg,

Llw

At length, however, the fair Morvudd was reluctantly torn from her enamoured swain by her parents, who bestowed her hand, where they could not command her heart, in a more formal and binding manner, on one Cynvrig Cynin, an aged dotard, whose wealth was his only recommendation. Her lover's affliction on this event, and his inextinguishable passion, appear from several of the poems, which he has dedicated to his Morvudd, and which abound also in strokes of caustic ridicule against her decrepid spouse, whom he commemorates under the humiliating appellation of Bwa Bach, or the Little Hunchback. But Davydd ab Gwilym was not satisfied with such revenge only as his muse could inflict: he employed every expedient he could devise to procure an interview with the object of his attachment, and at length succeeded in carrying her away from her husband. The lovers, however, were, after some search, overtaken; and a heavy fine was the reward of our bard's dexterity. Being unable to pay this, he was cast into prison, where he might have ended his days, but for the generosity of some of his countrymen in Glamorganshire, who, by relieving him from the penalty, gave a convincing proof of the general esteem in which he was held. Nor did the poet himself ever forget the debt of gratitude he owed, on this account, to his liberal benefactors. He frequently takes occasion to advert to the benevolent deed; and two of his poems are expressly devoted to its commemoration*.

Among the bardic cotemporaries of Davydd ab Gwilym,

Llw a chred, myn y bedydd,
I mi dan ganghèni gwydd,
A rhwymaw llaw yn y llwyn.
Yn ddiddig, a'i bardd addwyn.
Myn Mair! a bu'n ofeiriad
Madog Benvras, mydrwas mad."

* See his "Poems," No. 93, and the "Appendix," No. 11.

with whom he had formed any particular intimacy, was Gruffydd Grug, a native of Anglesey, distinguished as a favoured votary of the muse. A sort of amicable rivalry took place between the two poets, which gave birth to many spirited effusions on each side, and some of which have survived to the present day*. At length the contention assumed a more hostile character, and might have terminated in the total extinction of their friendship, had not such an event been averted by the ingenious stratagem of a mutual friend, who managed to convey to each of the rival bards a report of his opponent's death, which had the anticipated effect of extracting from both the expression of their deep regret, as well as an interchange of elegiac effusions, adapted to the supposed mournful occasion in all the fulness of unaffected and genuine grief. The subsequent detection of this venial fraud, and the reciprocal sentiments it had been the means of disclosing, occasioned a reconciliation between the contending poets, and even a renewal of their original friendship with a sincerity, that secured its continuance during the rest of their lives.

Of the latter years of our bard's existence we have only a general account, which states, that they were consumed in his native parish of Llanbadarn, where also had been his paternal home. His parents, however, were now no more; and he had likewise experienced the misery of surviving all the rest of his nearest friends, among whom were to be numbered his two generous patrons, and his fair Morvudd. His maternal uncle, Llywelyn, he lost while yet young by the act of an assassin, and his muse was taught to bewail him with an affectionate sorrow. One of his poems on this occasion (for it may reasonably be inferred, from the prolific

* These are twenty-nine in number, and are preserved among the poems of Davydd ab Gwilym.

nature of his muse, that he wrote more than one) is still extant*, and bears ample testimony to the grateful tenderness of his feelings. Ivor Hael and his family, to whom, while living, his poetical talent had ever been devoted, were now remembered, in their death, in some of his most plaintive strains, which, with respect to Ivor himself, expressed with fidelity the language of the heart. In one of his poems, in particular, in which he invokes the Summer to visit Glamorgan with her fairest smiles, he suddenly remembers that Ivor lies buried there, and, abruptly abandoning his original theme, makes an affecting transition to the grave of his patron. The following lines will convey some idea of the pathos of the original:—

From dewy lawns I'll pluck the rose,
With every fragrant flow'r that blows;
The earliest promise of the spring
To Ivor's honour'd grave I'll bring.
This humble rite shall oft be paid,
To deck the spot where he is laid,
To shew how much for him I mourn,
How much I weep o'er Ivor's urn†.

But it was Morvudd, the ill-fated, the never forgotten Morvudd, at whose shrine the offerings of his muse were made with the greatest frequency and the most fervent devotion. One hundred and nine of his poems, and those generally of greater length than what were dedicated by Petrarch to his Laura, are still preserved; and we know, upon the bard's own authority, that he composed at least thirty-eight more on this favourite and inexhaustible theme. None

* No. 232 of the "Poems."

† This translation, which is borrowed from the "Life of Davydd ab Gwilym," prefixed to his works, is highly creditable to the elegant taste of the writer. The original lines may be seen at the close of No. 14 of the "Appendix."

of his effusions, however, on her death are now extant, though it is probable that, in the pensive tranquillity of his declining age, he must have devoted some tributary strains to this mournful subject. A transient allusion is all that remains. It occurs in the "Bard's last song", and has been thus happily rendered into English:—

Ivor is gone, my friend most dear;
And Nest*, sweet soother of my care;
Morvudd, my soul's delight is fled:
All moulder in their clay-cold bed!
And I, oppressed with woe, remain,
Victim to age and lingering pain†.

So constant was Davydd ab Gwilym's attachment to his muse, that we find him invoking her even in his last moments. On the awful bed of death he seems to have sought in her voice the consolation of that Hope, whose home is in heaven. One of his effusions, perhaps the only one, on this impressive occasion remains. It is entitled, "The Death-bed Lay of the Bard", and may, perhaps, more justly be regarded as his "last song", than the one of that designation above quoted. It is full of remorse and penitence for his past life, accompanied by a strain of genuine piety, as may be collected from the following version, however unequal, in poetical merit, to the original:—

My shapeless sin with dread I view,
And tremble at the reck'ning due;
I dread my folly's long career,
But, more than all, my God I fear.

Mysterious Being, prone to save,
Thy pardon for the past I crave;
The time arrives, death's awful time,
And with it come the stings of crime.

* The wife of Ivor Hael.

† See No. 16 of the "Appendix"; this translation is also extracted from the 'Life' of the poet already alluded to.

God is the world the pious know:
Without Him all were waste below,
Without Him 'twere a desert state,
One cheerless void, all desolate.

O Thou! to whom true faith is dear,
Grant, as my parting hour draws near,
Grant, as I heave my latest sigh,
No foe may watch in triumph nigh*.

The thought, expressed in the last stanza, might imply, that, although our poet had outlived his friends, he had not survived his enemies. It is probable, indeed, that his propensity to satire had been the means of provoking the enmity of many of his cotemporaries, and especially among the clergy, against whom the invectives of his muse appear to have been often directed†. But in a poem, entitled "The Bard's Confession of his Sins‡", he acknowledges the culpability of his conduct in this instance as well as in several others; and we may infer, that the poem in question was composed during the latter part of his life, when old age had communicated a suitable seriousness to his meditations.

We have now arrived at the close of our bard's earthly career; and we may say of him, as of the swan, that he terminated his life with a song. But, unlike the swan, his tuneful talent was not confined to the hour of dissolution. On the contrary,

——————servatur ad imum,
Qualis ab incœpto processerat, et sibi constat.

His death is reported to have taken place about the year 1400, in Anglesey, according to some authorities, but, according to others of a more credible character, at his home

* No. 246 of the "Poems".

† See the "Poems", No. 64, 149, 154, 217, 224.

‡ No. 245 of the "Poems".

in Llanbadarn. His ashes repose at Ystrad Flur, in the county of Cardigan; and his tomb has not wanted the congenial tribute of the muse. Some kindred spirit has recorded on it his friendship for the poet, and his regret for his loss, in an epitaph, of which the translation that follows will afford an imperfect idea:—

Gwilym, bless'd by all the nine,
Sleep'st thou, then, beneath this tree;
'Neath this yew, whose foliage fine
Shades alike thy song and thee?

Mantling yew-tree, he lies near,
Gwilym, Teivi's nightingale*,
And his song too slumbers here,
Tuneless ever through the vale.

But the commemoration of his fame has not been confined to an anonymous herald. Three of our poet's bardic cotemporaries have left elegies on his death, which bespeak at once the high estimation in which the writers regarded his talents, and their respect for his private worth†. The spirit of rivalry, which may naturally be imagined to have

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* In the original "*Eos Teivi:*" *Eos Dyved*, however, or the Dimetian Nightingale, was the designation by which our bard was frequently known. The following is the epitaph, of which a translation is here given:—

"Davydd, gwiw awenydd gwrdd,
Ai yma'th roed dan goed gwyrdd?
Dan lasprem hoyw ywen hardd,
Lle 'i claddwyd, y cuddiwyd cerdd.

"Glas dew ywen, glân Eos—Deivi,
Mae Davydd yn agos!
Yn y pridd mae'r gerdd ddiddos;
Diddawn in' bob dydd a nos!

† The poets, here alluded to, were Iolo Goch, Madog Benvras, and Gruffydd Grug.

existed during the life of the bard, was at once quelled; or it only lived to heap on his tomb its gratuitous trophies.

The character of Davydd ab Gwilym has been variously represented,—some memorials ascribing to him a purity of manners and a correctness of conduct, which, to judge from his writings, he did not always evince. It may not be fair, however, in all cases, to condemn the man on account of the failings of the poet; and Davydd ab Gwilym's life may have exemplified the injustice of such an act. What he wrote in the warmth or thoughtlessness of his poetical inspirations may have been condemned by the gravity of his more sober reflections. Yet it must after all be admitted, that this is but an hypothesis, which it is now, perhaps, too late to establish or refute. One thing may with certainty be affirmed, that, whatever be the complexion of the majority of Davydd ab Gwilym's surviving effusions, there are not wanting, in others, the most satisfactory evidence of a sound moral and religious feeling, highly creditable to the memory of the author.

Of the merit of our poet's productions it is almost superfluous to speak: the meed of praise, awarded by his cotemporaries, has received the sanction of four centuries, and Davydd ab Gwilym is still regarded as one of the most eminent of the Welsh bards, whether we estimate him by the originality of his genius, or the harmonious character of his versification. Nor should it be forgotten, that he wrote at a period when the laws of Welsh poetry were in a state of considerable fluctuation, exposed to the various caprices of writers, who, having abandoned the rich and full-flowing melody of the old metres, were severally anxious to substitute in their stead their own crude inventions. Davydd ab Gwilym was among the very few, that rose superior to the prejudices and disadvantages of the age; and

he had the peculiar felicity of establishing a style of versification, which has become a model to all succeeding bards. He is likewise supposed to have introduced the *Cywydd*, a species of composition, that has since his time been constantly adopted in Wales.

Independent of the general merit of the subject of this memoir as a votary of the muse, there is one characteristic of his poetry worthy of particular notice, and the more so, as belonging, in an essential manner, to the genius of the Welsh tongue, and the singular structure of Welsh verse. This is the remarkable felicity, with which he generally adapts the diction to the immediate subject. Pre-eminent as the advantages are, which his materials afforded in this respect, he has availed himself of them with an effect hardly conceivable, and not to be adequately explained to one unacquainted with the Welsh language. Thus, nothing can exceed, in harmonious sweetness, some of his love-poems; while in instances of another nature, as in his description of a thunder storm, the sound is accommodated to the sense with an appalling fidelity*. No examples in other poets,

* This description may be seen in No. 44. The following version of a part of it is extracted from the "Lyric Poems" of Mr. E. Williams, vol. ii. p. 21. It may be proper to premise, however, that the English language seems incapable of representing this peculiarity of the Welsh; and an objection may also be made to the metre selected by the translator. It wants the sonorous and dignified character of the original. The lines are these:—

"Thou fierce fiery dragon, thus roaring aloud,
With rumble tremendous aloft in the cloud,
Like a bull in wild anger assailing the rocks,
And striking proud mountains with terrible shocks;
At thy trump's mighty clangor mad elements jar,
And, full of thy furies, quick rush to the war;
Thy wild hissing flames with huge waters contend,
And Morvudd, alas! thinks the world at an end."

Another instance of this pictorial poetry, if the expression may be allowed,

ancient or modern, are, in any degree, to be compared with these.

But it is not merely in the mechanism of his poetry that Davydd ab Gwilym excels. His effusions are often pregnant with deep thought, bold figurative inventions*, and with those delicate touches of sentiment, that peculiarly mark the gifted mind, and can only be duly appreciated where they are thoroughly felt. But the predominant attribute of his muse, and that in which the poet himself seems most to have delighted, is tenderness. Of more than two hundred and sixty poems, that he has left us, above half are devoted to love, or the celebration of the fair sex. Yet, as he always wrote under the influence of existing circumstances, and made the events of his life the themes of his muse, this peculiarity cannot be considered surprising. It, however, was the means of exercising his genius on a subject, to which it seems to have been pre-eminently adapted. But, whatever excellence belongs to the effusions

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occurs in No. 54, where a fog is described in language singularly appropriate to the occasion.

* One characteristic of this description, remarkably indicative of his inventive powers, deserves to be more particularly noticed; and this is the felicity, with which he frequently makes the various objects of nature, whether living or inanimate, auxiliary to the fictions of his muse. Instead of adopting the poetical machinery of other nations, his "imagination bodies forth" a new species of beings, before unknown as the agents of poetry. Thus, in one instance, (see No. 69 of his "Poems,") the wind is invested with the attributes of a messenger between him and his beloved Morvudd, as being the only one likely to elude the vigilance of his enemies; and the sun and even the summer are, on other occasions, personified as the bearers of his gratitude to his countrymen in Glamorganshire. (See No. 93, and 11 in the Appendix.) But he seems chiefly to have delighted in the agency of the animal creation; for his amatory poems abound in instances, where birds, beasts, and even the tenants of the deep, are employed as the ministers of his love.

of Davydd ab Gwilym, it is such as cannot be represented with adequate justice in a translation, so much does it depend on the niceties of expression, and other verbal auxiliaries, peculiar to the language in which he wrote.

Of our poet's more general accomplishments it is difficult to speak with any certainty. His productions supply some proofs of his learning, at least of such learning as that age was qualified to afford. Allusions to the works of Greece, Rome, and modern Italy, occur occasionally in his poems, and in some instances, where his knowledge could not have been derived through the medium of a translation. With the poetry of Petrarch he appears, in particular, to have been well acquainted; and the congeniality of disposition discoverable in the two poets, as well as the painful similarity of their destinies, will naturally account for any preference evinced by the Welsh bard for his Italian prototype. With these his classical attainments, as they may be not improperly called, he united the national qualification of playing upon the harp*, which he seems first to have learnt, at an early age, under the tuition of his kinsman, Llywelyn ab Gwilym; and it is to be inferred from one of his poems, that he delighted to administer, in this manner, to the gratification of his female acquaintance. The person of Davydd ab Gwilym is described as remarkable for its elegance and symmetrical beauty; and he is thought to have been not insensible to the means of displaying it to the greatest advantage†. In a word, Davydd ab Gwilym appears to

* This art was, according to the ancient manners of Wales, among the necessary accomplishments of a gentleman, whence, in the Welsh laws, a harp is reckoned as one of his requisites.

† His figure is represented as tall and slender, and his flaxen hair as flowing in ringlets over his shoulders; and such, he tells us, were its attractions, that, when he was at church, the young females, instead of attending

have possessed, in a favoured degree, the graces both of person and mind; and, allied, as these were, to poetical talents of the highest order, they contributed to render him one of the most remarkable characters of his country during the age in which he lived, and which, without any exaggerated eulogy, he may be said to have adorned.

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to their devotion, were in the habit of whispering to one another, that he wore his sister's hair.—See No. 136 of his "Poems".

OWAIN GLYNDWR.

The annals of insurrection are not those, to which we should generally be disposed to look for materials of the most gratifying interest. There is something in the events, with which they are pregnant, so much at variance with the "noiseless tenour" of ordinary life, that the common sympathies of our nature can be but rarely excited by them,—to say nothing of the enormities, to which all political convulsions necessarily give birth. But, whatever be the general feeling in this respect, it certainly has its exceptions, and those, too, in cases where the means have not been sanctified by the event. Treason is generally allowed to lose, in its triumph, its original odium, and to assume, instead, a more amiable or a more dignified character*. The adventurer has hazarded his fate on the die; and he is consigned to infamy or honour, as he ascends a scaffold or a throne.

Yet this rule, as already intimated, is not unexceptionable. It has not always happened, that the misfortunes of the traitor have been followed by a reprobation of his deeds. Some splendid exceptions might be adduced, and, among these, the well-known instances of Russell and Sydney. Whatever may have been the errors of their principles, or the fallacy of their judgment, we willingly concede to them

* Hence the well-known English epigram:—

Treason doth never prosper: what's the reason?
Why, when it prospers, none dare call it treason.

the merit of having conscientiously endeavoured to establish the liberty they professed to venerate. They fell martyrs in its cause; and time, which hurries to oblivion the acrimonies of political dissensions, has consecrated their names in the poet's strains, and in the eulogies of the orator.

Somewhat similar to these examples is that of Owain Glyndwr. His career, indeed, was not terminated by the axe of the executioner; but his aim was of a similar nature; and in his efforts to accomplish it he was alike unsuccessful. He sought, like Sydney or Russell, the freedom of his native soil; but the circumstances under which he acted, and the pretensions to which he laid claim, if they have not communicated an equal lustre to his enterprise, have rendered it undoubtedly less exceptionable. It was perhaps treason; but it was treason of so peculiar a character, that whatever obloquy may have been originally attached to it, has long since given place to a respect for the patriotism of its author, and a commiseration of his fate. On this account, Owain Glyndwr has ever been numbered among the most remarkable characters in the biographical annals of Wales*.

* It may be proper here to premise, that the ensuing memoir is indebted, for its materials, in a great degree, but by no means entirely, to the "Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr," by the Rev. Thomas Thomas, published about two years ago. This work is deserving of much praise as an industrious compilation; and the author seems to disclaim any other merit. It is more remarkable for its redundancies than its defects, though even these are occasionally obvious. However, it must be admitted, that such a body of particulars, relating to the life of our distinguished countryman, was never before brought under one view, though mixed up with much matter of an extraneous and irrelevant nature. It may here be mentioned, that, in the year 1775, a work, of the same title as the one alluded to in this note, was published by a namesake also of the present author (Rev. J. Thomas), from

The subject of the present memoir is known to English readers by the name of Owen Glendower*, an appellation which owes its origin to that adopted in this article. By his countrymen he seems to have been formerly called Owain Glyndyvrdwy, agreeably with a national usage, by which individuals were often designated from their estates or places of residence †; and hence is derived the contracted name of Glyndwr. It is likely, however, that he was also known to his cotemporaries by the appellation of Owain ab Gruffydd: at least, it appears, that such was the name by which he was accustomed to designate himself‡. His father, Gruffydd Vychan, was tenth, in lineal descent, from Bleddyn ab Cynvyn, Prince of Powys, head of one of the five royal tribes of Wales, and reckoned among his ancestors, in the female line, the founders of two other tribes, Rhys ab Tewdwr and Gruffydd ab Cynan §. Thus nobly de-

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a MS. written by the Rev. Thomas Ellis, formerly Rector of Dolgellau, in Merionethshire. I have not been able to meet with a copy of this work; and it does not appear, that the author of the "Memoirs" was more fortunate, or that he was even aware of its existence.

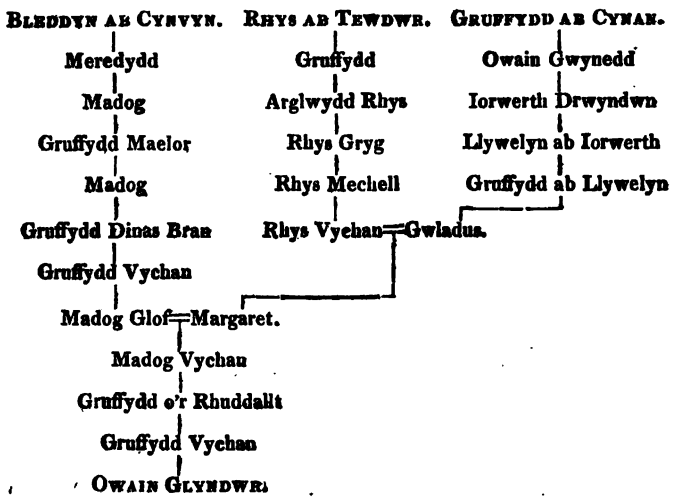
* This name, like most Welsh names, has been sadly distorted by English writers, who have spelt it, indifferently, Glendour, Glendore, Glendower, Glyndowr, and Glyndourdy. The English in this respect, it may be remarked, have assumed a privilege of taking the same liberty with Welsh appellations, that the French have proverbially used with theirs.

† Such were formerly the names of Owain Gwynedd, Owain Cyveiliog, and others; and the families of Hanmer and Mostyn, and some more that might be specified, are instances of the partial remains of the practice even to the present day. The same custom also prevailed among the Britons of Cornwall, as is evident in the names of Trelawney, Tremayne, Tremilian, and many others, still common in that country.

‡ This will be shewn by a curious original document, noticed in the sequel, and hitherto, I believe, unpublished.

§ The following genealogical scheme will shew the three royal tribes, above mentioned, centering in Owain Glyndwr:

scended on the paternal side, Owain Glyndwr claimed an alliance not less honourable on the part of his mother, who, according to some authorities, was in a direct line from Llywelyn, last Prince of Wales *.



Some valuable observations on the pedigree of Owain Glyndwr, and especially on his descent from Bleddyn ab Cynvyn, by the Rev. Walter Davies, of Manavon, may be seen in the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. pp. 421, &c. 455, &c.

* His mother's name was Helen, the daughter of Thomas ab Llywelyn, who married Elinor Goch, grand-daughter of Llywelyn, last Prince of Wales. There is some uncertainty, however, as to the mother of Elinor, who, according to some, was Catharine, daughter of Llywelyn, and the wife of Philip ab Ivor, of Iscoed. But this must have been a natural child of the Welsh prince, as the only issue of his marriage with Eleanor de Montford appears to have been one daughter, Gwenllian, who took the veil in an English convent, with her cousin, a daughter of David. See p. 196, *supra*. It must have been, therefore, in the illegitimate line, that Owain Glyndwr traced his pedigree from the last Llywelyn; yet Llywelyn, himself, whose father was a natural child of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, is an instance, that illegitimacy was, in Wales, no bar to the succession. Warrington, in his History, states Catherine, above named, to have been married to Malcolm, Earl

The statement of these genealogical pretensions may appear ostentatious to those, who are ignorant of the ancient customs of Wales in this respect, or who are not aware of its particular application to the instance before us. It seems unnecessary, however, to pause here for the purpose of defending a practice, which has been the object of ridicule only where it has not been the subject of a candid investigation.

The birth-place of Owain Glyndwr is a matter of uncertainty; but it is probable, that it was either Glyndyvrdwy, in Merionethshire, or Sycharth, in the county of Denbigh *. Owain Glyndwr himself resided occasionally at each of these places; it is therefore reasonable to conclude, that they were, in their turns, the abode of his parents. But, whatever soil had the honour of his birth, the event took place, according to the most credible authorities, on the 28th of May, 1354†; and, if we might lend an ear to the tales of superstition, it was not unaccompanied by those phenomena, which have been supposed to mark the nativity of illustrious men. It is safer, however, to ascribe these preternatural prognostics to the ignorance of the age or the credulous adulation of his admirers ‡.

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of Fife. There is, however, more probability in the account generally received.

* Mr. Thomas, in a note on his "Memoirs," p. 48, fixes the birth-place of Glyndwr at Trevgarn, in Pembrokeshire, on the authority of a "MS. belonging to the late Mr. Pugh, of Ty Gwyn, Denbighshire." Trevgarn, it seems, was the residence of Glyndwr's maternal grandfather; and it is not improbable, that his mother occasionally lived there. But the question respecting Glyndwr's birth is still *sub judice*.

† Some accounts state the year to be 1349, and in the *Greal*, p. 31, it is 1348. If, however, as stated, he was 61 at his death, in 1415, the year adopted in the text must be correct.

‡ Hollinshed, with a view to this point, gravely relates, that "strange won-

As Owain Glyndwr's father was a person not only of rank, but of considerable property, it is natural to imagine, that he gave his son an education suitably liberal. Where he acquired his rudimental instruction, however, we are not informed; but his education was completed in one of the Inns of Court, where he entered as a student of the English laws. He was afterwards called to the bar, though it is probable he never practised much in his profession. His forensic views seem soon to have given place to the more powerful attractions of a military life, which both his particular disposition, and the political events of the age, conspired to favour. Much of his early years, therefore, it is likely, was devoted to the profession of arms; and he appears in this capacity to have ingratiated himself, in a remarkable manner, with Richard II., whom he accompanied, as his body-squire *, in his wars in France and Ireland, as well as in the domestic contests between the Houses of York and Lancaster, which had their origin at this period. It was the lot of Glyndwr to be engaged as an active partisan in the cause of Richard, who, as appears by a document still extant, rewarded his fidelity by conferring on him the

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ders happened at the nativity of this man; for the same night, that he was born, all his father's horses in the stable were found to stand in blood up to their bellies." This was, no doubt, meant to prefigure the sanguinary career of the infant hero. Shakespear has also embodied some of the popular superstitions, connected with this event, in the following well known passage:—

——————————" At my birth
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes;
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous in the frighted fields.
These signs have mark'd me extraordinary,
And all the courses of my life do shew,
I am not in the roll of common men."

* *Scutiger*, or shield-bearer, is the name given to the office he filled.

honour of knighthood*. The zeal he thus manifested he retained to the last; for, when the unfortunate monarch was a prisoner in the castle of Flint, Glyndwr was found among the number of his few faithful adherents. He procured his release by exchange.

Upon the deposition of Richard, in the year 1399, and the consequent accession of Henry IV., Owain Glyndwr, at this time about forty-five years of age, retired to his patrimonial estate, lamenting the fallen fortunes of his late master, and having, as may be concluded, no favours to expect from his successor. During this season of relaxation from the feverish turmoils of public life, he seems to have dedicated himself to the offices of hospitality, and the encouragement of the national minstrelsy; for on both these points the surviving productions of contemporary bards are loud in his praise†. His mansion was open to all that chose

* The document, alluded to, is mentioned in Collins's Peerage, vol. vii. p. 507. It is a record of the proceedings in the celebrated cause, between Sir Richard le Scrope and Sir Robert le Grosvenour, concerning some armorial bearings. Glyndwr is described, among the witnesses, by the title of Sir Owen de Glendore. His brother is also named there as Tudor de Glendore. This cause began in 1386. So, it is probable, Glyndwr received the equestrian honour in the early part of his military career; but it does not appear, that he ever adopted it after his retirement to Wales, or that it was recognised by his countrymen.

† Among these the most conspicuous was Iolo Goch, who lived with Glyndwr as his domestic bard, and has left many poems in praise of his patron. One in particular, entitled "The Invitation Poem," describes his hospitality as unbounded, and especially towards the bards, who were entertained in such numbers at Sycharth, one of his seats, that Iolo calls it, on one occasion, "the congregating-place of the bards," *Sycharth buarth y beirdd*. It appears from the same poem, that Glyndwr kept a literally open house, having neither bolts nor locks to his doors; and that the office of porter was, consequently, unnecessary. The following lines of the "Invitation Poem" allude to what has just been mentioned:

"Anhawdd yn vynych yno
Weled na chlicied na chlo,

to resort to it, and was supplied with every convenience for the accommodation of his numerous guests, that his liberality could devise or his means afford *. During a part of his former life, it is probable, as well as at present, his time was chiefly spent in these social enjoyments, surrounded and beloved by his family, his friends, and dependents. He had early been married to a daughter of Sir David Hanmer, of Hanmer, in Flintshire, one of the Judges of the King's Bench, and a gentleman of distinguished birth and connexions. With this lady he appears to have lived in great felicity; and a numerous progeny was the fruit of the propitious union †.

A year had scarcely elapsed after the fall of king Ri-

Na gwall, na newyn, na gwarth,
Na syched vyth yn Sycharth."

If you to Sycharth should repair,
Nor locks nor bolts will you see there;
Nor want nor hunger there shall reign,
Nor e'er of thirst shall you complain.

* Iolo, in the poem mentioned in the preceding note, gives a particular description of his patron's mansion, presumed to be Sycharth, (See *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 459). He compares it, in general, to Westminster Abbey. Among its particular conveniences, he specifies nine halls, each containing a wardrobe of clothes for the use of Glyndwr's dependents, or, it might be, of his guests. In the vicinity of the house were a park stocked with deer, a rabbit warren, fish-ponds, a heronry, an orchard, a vineyard, and a mill, for the accommodation of his visitors. Of the wine, ale, and other beverage, the bard also speaks in high terms; nor does he forget the merits of the culinary department. And the feeling strains, in which he commemorates these epicurean virtues in the Lord of Glyndyvrdwy, prove that he wrote from a full experience of their influence.

† Iolo Goch describes Glyndwr's wife as "honourable, generous, and noble," and her children he calls "a beautiful nest of chieftains." The number of Glyndwr's sons is uncertain. They were probably grown up at the time of their father's insurrection, and may have fallen in battle. He had five daughters, who will be more particularly noticed in the sequel.

chard, before this scene of hospitality and repose was obscured by circumstances, which influenced the future destiny of Glyndwr, and have communicated to his history that particular interest, with which it is regarded even after the expiration of four centuries.

Some years before the period, to which allusion has now been made, an altercation had arisen between the subject of this memoir and Reginald, Lord Grey de Ruthin, whose lands lay contiguous to the hereditary estates of Glyndwr. Upon some frivolous pretext, Lord Grey took possession of a large tract of uncultivated ground, which had been always claimed by Glyndwr, and which the latter now recovered from its illegal occupier by a suit at law. Lord Grey, thus compelled to relinquish the property he had unjustly seized, nourished the most vindictive resentment against a man, whom, as he had attempted to injure, he was now determined to hate. Accordingly, when the dethronement of Richard had destroyed the influence of Glyndwr at the English court, Grey again took forcible possession of the land in question, and retained it in open defiance of the right owner, who, in consequence, presented a remonstrance to Parliament against this arbitrary transaction; but the appeal was treated with a contempt, not only mortifying to Glyndwr, but extremely impolitic as it regarded the state of public affairs at that time in England.

Yet the enmity of Lord Grey did not rest here: even the triumph he had already obtained was insufficient to satiate his revenge. In the year 1400 Henry IV. meditated an expedition against Scotland, and, preparatory to this, he sent writs of summons, according to the custom of the times, to his several feudal barons, and tenants *in capite*, requiring their attendance with their vassals in this military enterprise. A writ of this nature was directed to Owain

Glyndwr, and entrusted to Lord Grey for the purpose of being delivered to him. This, however, the vindictive nobleman maliciously neglected to do; and Glyndwr was not apprised of the royal mandate, until it was too late for him to comply with it. His non-attendance was immediately ascribed by Henry to a spirit of disaffection; and the construction was rendered more plausible by some malevolent and unfounded representations of Grey. The consequence of the whole was, that Glyndwr was pronounced a traitor, and his property declared to be confiscated*.

Wrongs such as these were sufficiently calculated to exasperate the feelings of any one not wholly insensible to his own honour. But upon the temper of Glyndwr they operated in a peculiar manner, connected, as they were, with the particular circumstances, both private and public, by which his fate was beset. He was descended, as we have seen, by both parents, from ancestors who had once swayed the destinies of his native land: they were the potentates and princes of Wales, in the days of her independence; and in Glyndwr appeared now to be centered the only indisputable title to the inheritance of their honours. Little more than a century had passed away since the final subjugation of Wales by Edward; and the spirit of animosity, which that event had engendered, might be said to be rather suppressed than extinguished. It had not, indeed, with one or two trivial exceptions†, burst into an open

* It has been stated, that Glyndwr's possessions were, on this occasion, transferred to Lord Grey, but this does not seem consistent with the grant of them, which Henry made, shortly afterwards, to the Earl of Somerset.

† The most memorable of these was the insurrection of Sir Gruffydd Llwyd, a chieftain of Carnarvonshire, about the year 1360. But it was of very short duration. After having taken some fortresses in the Marches, he was made prisoner, and terminated his career on the scaffold.

flame; but this was prevented more by the oppressive dominion of the conquerors, than by any indisposition on the part of the conquered. It cannot then be a subject of surprise, that these feelings should have had a more than common effect on the mind of Glyndwr, roused as they were by the injuries he had recently sustained. Nor was it the least cause of his present exasperation, that these injuries were inflicted under the sanction of a sovereign, to whom he had been actively opposed, and whose assumption of power he could only regard as an usurpation. Such were the complicated circumstances, that now exercised their combined influence over the destiny of the Welsh chieftain, and gave a determined impulse to his resolutions and conduct.

The first act of Glyndwr, resulting from the treatment he had experienced, was to repossess himself of the lands of which he had been so wantonly deprived; and, having accomplished this, he proceeded to retort upon Lord Grey the consequences of his injustice, by seizing also a considerable portion of that nobleman's hereditary domains. Grey was, at this time, at the English court, and, as soon as the news of these events arrived there, he was despatched by Henry, with Lord Talbot, to inflict summary vengeance upon Glyndwr, whom the king unwisely chose to regard as acting more from motives of public treason towards himself, than of private hostility against the individual, whose oppressive conduct had provoked, if it had not justified, these retaliatory proceedings. Such were the secrecy and expedition, with which the two noblemen executed the king's commands, that they had nearly succeeded in taking by surprise the object of their pursuit. His house was almost surrounded before he was aware of their approach, and it was only by his superior local knowledge, that he found means of escaping to the adjoining woods.

The die was now now cast: Glyndwr, thus proscribed and assailed as a traitor, had no alternative but to support the character with firmness and energy. He accordingly made an open avowal of his designs, and, on the 20th September, 1400, caused himself to be proclaimed Prince of Wales. On the same day he profited by a fair held at Ruthin, in Denbighshire, within the territory of Lord Grey, to subject the town to the united horrors of pillage and conflagration. Many of the inhabitants, as well as of the English merchants that attended the fair, were slain in the general confusion; and such, as escaped this fate, had to lament the plunder or destruction of their property. After this exploit, which may be considered as the first act of public hostility on the part of Glyndwr, he retired to the neighbouring mountains, for the purpose both of sheltering himself from his enemies, and of gaining time to prepare for new operations.

The rumour of this revolt, in the mean time, spread rapidly through all parts of Wales, and numbers flocked to the standard of the insurgent chief: some from a private dislike of Lord Grey; others from a political hostility towards Henry, whom all the adherents of the late king denounced as an usurper; but by far the greatest number from a patriotic anxiety to liberate their country from the yoke of the English, which the arbitrary conduct of the government, and especially of the Lords Marchers, had rendered peculiarly galling. Some ancient bardic predictions, preserved traditionally in the country, had also their share in exciting the general enthusiasm on this occasion; and Glyndwr was hailed by the people as the "heir of the prophecy*," who was to realize their fondest illusions, to re-

* "Mab y Darogan" was the favourite term applied by the bards to their hero and patron.

store the freedom of his country, and to avenge her misfortunes.

As soon as Henry was apprised of these insurrectionary movements, he determined to attack the author of them in person, and, if possible, to crush, in its infancy, a rebellion, which, he foresaw, might, in his particular situation, assume a dangerous character. He accordingly entered North Wales with a large force, comprising the feudal levies of ten English counties, and proceeded as far as Anglesey, marking his course by blood and desolation. But he was unable to bring Glyndwr to an engagement. The wily chieftain, following the example of his countrymen on former occasions of a similar nature, took refuge among the recesses of the Snowdon hills, and Henry was compelled to retrace his steps without having accomplished any part of his enterprise. As if in revenge for the humiliation he had thus sustained, he immediately made a grant of all Glyndwr's forfeited estates to his own brother, the Earl of Somerset,—an act which only served, at the moment, to evince the impotence of Henry's resentment, whatever was its subsequent operation*.

This vindictive measure was speedily followed by one of a different nature, by which the king hoped to effect, by conciliatory means, what his arms had, as yet, failed to achieve. He published a proclamation, offering pardon to all the Welsh insurgents, that should make immediate sub-

* Although, at first, the Earl of Somerset could have derived no benefit from this grant, it is certain that the property came at length to the family, who enjoyed it for several years. Upon the attainder and execution of the Duke of Somerset, however, in the reign of Edward IV., about the year 1463, the estates were disposed of by the crown, and came into the possession of different proprietors. Glyndyrdwy, the principal portion, now belongs to Gruffydd Howell Vaughan, Esq., of Rûg.

mission to his son Henry, at Chester. Such, however, was the attachment of the Welsh to their leader, as well as their enthusiasm in the cause he had espoused, that the proffered boon was universally rejected; and Glyndwr found the number of his followers daily increasing with the increasing popularity of his enterprise.

Henry, however, at the instigation of his son, the Prince of Wales, then but thirteen years of age, made another attempt to recal the Welsh to their allegiance. On two several occasions, in the year after Glyndwr's insurrection, a pardon was offered to all his followers, that should immediately lay down their arms. From this act of grace the Welsh chieftain himself, and a few of his principal adherents, as well as all that were, at the time, in the custody of the English, were excluded*; they were still to be exposed to all the penalties of treason. This effort, like the preceding one, proved unsuccessful; and it is to be considered honourable to the national character, that the insurgents chose to maintain their fidelity even at the risk of their lives, rather than purchase their safety by the sacrifice of their leader.

Meanwhile, the force of Glyndwr had been considerably augmented, not only by the addition of many inhabitants of Wales, within the immediate sphere of his influence, but also by the accession of several natives of the Principality, who had, for some time, resided in England. He accordingly found himself at the head of a force, formidable at least by its numbers and zeal, if not by its discipline. With a small detachment of this army he proceeded towards the

* The persons of most note, besides Glyndwr himself, who were excepted from this pardon, were Rhys ab Tudur, and William ab Tudur, the latter of whom was afterwards taken into favour by Henry, upon abandoning the standard of insurrection.

mountain of Pumlumon, on the borders of South Wales, for the purpose, it may be presumed, of establishing, on that advantageous and commanding position, a central rallying post, to which his friends, from both divisions of the Principality, might repair. In his way to Pumlumon, Glyndwr committed many depredations on the estates of the Lords Marchers, through which he passed, and especially on the towns of Welshpool and Montgomery, which were either pillaged or burnt. The Abbey of Cwmhir, and the Castle of Maelienydd, or Radnor, were also visited with all the horrors of fire and sword. An act of barbarity was committed at the latter place, in the indiscriminate massacre of the whole garrison, which it seems difficult to justify from any information now extant. But, as the fortress was one of the strongest frontier posts in the possession of the Lords Marchers, it is probable, that it had been the source, in a particular degree, of terror and annoyance to the adjacent country *.

When Glyndwr had reached his mountain position, one of his first objects seems to have been to assail such of the neighbouring people, as were not well affected towards his cause, or had shewn themselves friendly to the interests of Henry. Among these, the inhabitants of Cardiganshire, had made themselves conspicuous in their attachment to the English monarch. Against them, therefore, Glyndwr directed his earliest operations, making frequent incursions into their country, and committing a variety of the most harassing excesses. Goaded, at length, by these repeated outrages, they resolved to make a vigorous resistance, and,

* This Castle belonged to the Mortimer family, and was gallantly defended by Sir Roger Mortimer, in the time of the last Llywelyn. See page 186, *supra*.

if possible, to dislodge their formidable assailant from the quarters he so inconveniently occupied in their vicinity; and such was the rapidity of their movements, that they succeeded in detaching Glyndwr from his main position, and in surrounding his force with an army considerably superior in numbers*. Thus situated, the Welsh chief soon perceived that his only chance of escape lay in some desperate effort. He, therefore, addressed his soldiers with a fervour excited by the occasion, telling them, that they must be prepared either to die of famine, or to cut their way through the enemy, from whose clemency, he added, there was nothing to anticipate; and finally he urged them, if death was to be their doom, at least to meet it with arms in their hands. Upon this, he commanded them to charge the enemy and to give no quarter; and they executed the order with such fury and impetuosity, that the Cardiganshire people retreated in the wildest confusion, and Glyndwr succeeded in rescuing his army from its perilous situation, with a considerable loss to the enemy †.

This gallant exploit, achieved, as it was, against a great superiority of force, had the effect not only of exalting the popularity of the Welsh chief, and of producing a considerable accession to the number of his followers, but also of awakening anew the slumbering apprehensions of Henry, who began now, it is probable, to entertain a higher notion than before of the valour and skill of his adversary. A second time, therefore, he entered the Principality, for the purpose of quelling the insurrection; but the result of this expedition was still less propitious than that of the former.

* The men of Cardiganshire were, on this occasion, about fifteen hundred, while it is not probable, that the force of Glyndwr exceeded two or three hundred.

† Their loss has been estimated at two hundred slain on the field.

After having committed the ravages and devastations, customary in the wars of those times, and seduced some of Glyndwr's principal partisans, the king was compelled to make an inglorious and disastrous retreat. Yet we find him soon afterwards meditating a fresh enterprise against Glyndwr, for which purpose he collected a large army, composed of the military levies of twenty-two counties. But the farther particulars are unknown, except that, according to one historian *, the event was equally infelicitous as in the preceding instances.

Notwithstanding that Henry had found the means of introducing a partial spirit of disaffection into the ranks of the insurgent chief, the latter found himself, at the commencement of the year 1402, in a formidable attitude. Partisans continued to crowd to his standard; and the smiles of hope grew brighter with the increase of his popularity. The appearance of a comet, about this period, had also a favourable influence on his fortunes, by the effect which it produced on the superstitious minds of his followers; and the effusions of the bards were not wanting to render the phenomenon still farther subservient to the interests of their patron †. Thus, in an unenlightened age, did this celestial visitor become an auxiliary, in no unimportant degree, to the cause of Glyndwr, which, hitherto unexpectedly prosperous, had, as his credulous countrymen were too easily brought to believe, at length been sanctioned by a preternatural omen.

Nor were the events that followed at all calculated to

* This historian is Carte.

† Iolo Goch, in particular, in his Poem on the Comet in question, (*Cywydd y Seren*,) somewhat profanely compares it with the star, which presaged the birth of our Saviour. But it is not, perhaps, surprising, that the enthusiasm of the occasion, conspiring with the superstitious ignorance of the times, should have seduced the poet into a comparison, so wild and fanatical.

abate the ardour of these sanguine prognostications. Lord Grey, the fountain of that tide of discord which now deluged the country, had made powerful preparations for assailing Glyndwr, and thus making some reparation for the commotion he had been the means of exciting. The object of his resentment, on being apprised of the circumstance, resolved not to wait for the threatened attack, and accordingly marched at once to the Castle of Ruthin, the residence of his antagonist. Having shewn himself before its walls with a small party, he feigned a sudden retreat, as if from a fear of encountering the superior force of the enemy. Grey, not suspecting the stratagem, immediately sallied after the supposed fugitives, who, upon arriving at a spot where their companions in arms lay in ambush, suddenly turned upon their pursuers, whom they easily routed, and took their commander prisoner. This event, it may be conceived, was mortifying to Lord Grey, in proportion as it was gratifying to his opponent, who had now in his power the individual from whom he had sustained so many wrongs. However, Glyndwr, much to his credit, did not, on this occasion, blindly abandon himself to the impulses of revenge: he contented himself by conveying his captive to one of the strong holds of Snowdon, where he remained in close confinement for some months. Eventually he was released by the payment of a ransom of ten thousand marks*, by a promise to observe a strict neutrality for the future, and by an engagement to marry one of Glyndwr's daughters. It may seem strange, that Lord Grey should, under any cir-

* This sum appears to have been chiefly paid by Henry, between whom and Lord Grey there was a strong personal attachment. The king, upon this occasion, granted a commission to eleven distinguished individuals empowering them to treat with Glyndwr for his favourite's release; and the terms, above mentioned, were the result of the negotiation.

cumstances, have assented to this last stipulation; but it is certain, that, immediately on his release, he married Jane, fourth daughter of the individual, whom he had made the object of his bitterest persecution *. Perhaps, in proposing this alliance, Glyndwr's only aim was to neutralize the hostility of an antagonist, whose local influence made him necessarily formidable; while Grey, likewise, may have been actuated by similar motives, in hoping thus to ward off the devastations of an adversary, whose power he had so grievously felt. This singular event, therefore, was, most probably, on both sides, a mere matter of policy: at least, it can hardly be supposed to have originated in a complete extinction of the reciprocal animosity, which there were so many reasons for entertaining. However, it does not appear, that Grey and Glyndwr were ever afterwards opposed in open hostility.

Glyndwr's next operations, after the capture of his powerful enemy, were directed against some individuals of note in North Wales, who had been particularly active in opposing his insurrection. He destroyed their houses and other property †, and then proceeded to lay siege to the town of Carnarvon, which was garrisoned by the English; but, after a protracted blockade, he was obliged to abandon his enterprise. It is, probably, to this period of our hero's life that we are to appropriate an instance of chastisement, at once cruel and singular, which he is said to have inflicted upon one of his political enemies, and who was

* There was no issue of this marriage.

† One of the principal sufferers on this occasion was Ieuan ab Meredydd, whose houses of Cevn-y-van and Cesail Gyvarch were entirely demolished. He was a staunch partisan of Henry, while his brother, Robert, fought in the ranks of Glyndwr. Ieuan died at Carnarvon during the siege of that town by Glyndwr, immediately after the destruction of his property.

also his kinsman. But the circumstances, connected with this tragical tale, have been variously told, and there is throughout the narrative an air of the romantic, which may well justify us in distrusting it. The substance of the common tradition is briefly as follows.

One Hywel Sele, who lived at Nannau, in Merionethshire, a cousin of Glyndwr, had rendered himself particularly obnoxious to his relative by the zeal, with which he espoused the cause of King Henry; and the consequence was, that an animosity of the most virulent character, heightened perhaps by their consanguinity, had been engendered between them. The abbot of a neighbouring monastery, desirous, as the story goes, of producing a reconciliation, contrived that the two cousins should meet. Hywel had the reputation of an excellent archer, and, as he and Glyndwr were walking in the grounds about Nannau, the latter pointed out a deer for the purpose of trying his kinsman's dexterity. The bow was immediately bent, and the arrow discharged, but not at the proposed object. Hywel had traitorously turned it against the breast of Glyndwr, which it struck with an unerring aim; but, as the chief wore armour under his clothes, the purpose of the assassin was foiled. Hywel was instantly seized by the followers of his intended victim, and thrown into the trunk of a hollow tree, where he was left to perish, and where his skeleton, the tradition adds, was found about forty years afterwards*.

* According to another version of this narrative, Glyndwr and Hywel accidentally met, while the former was enjoying the pleasures of the chase in the domains of his cousin. An altercation ensued, and terminated in an appeal to arms. Hywel fell in the combat, and his *lifeless* body was thrust into the cavity of a tree, a circumstance, which deducts much from the cruelty of the deed as above related. About forty years afterwards, a friend of Glyndwr, who was present during the transaction, revealed it to Hywel's surviving family, and his remains were discovered as already described.

Upon this occasion Glyndwr also burnt the house, and committed other devastations on the domains of his treacherous relative.

Soon after the unsuccessful siege of Carnarvon, the vengeance of Glyndwr was directed, in a manner not to be justified, against several religious edifices in North Wales. The cathedrals of Bangor and St. Asaph, with the buildings belonging to them, became, among others, the objects of his indiscriminate fury, and were levelled with the ground. It appears, that these sees had, through a mistaken policy, been chiefly filled, since the conquest of Wales, by English ecclesiastics, who consequently occupied nearly all the posts of honour or profit. The circumstance had been a cause of general discontent and complaint throughout the country, and may serve to explain, if not to defend, the excesses of the Welsh patriot; but, with respect to the diocese of St. Asaph, he had particular reasons for his resentment. Bishop Trevor, at that time in the enjoyment of the see, had originally professed himself a warm friend of the unfortunate Richard, by whom he had been preferred; but, upon the usurpation of Bolingbroke, he not only ungratefully deserted his patron, but devoted himself so ardently to the interests of Henry as to pronounce sentence of de-

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Until that period it was not known what fate had befallen the unfortunate lord of Nannau, such was the mysterious secrecy, in which his death was involved. The tree, (an oak,) to which this strange tradition belongs, was standing, until within a few years, in the Park at Nannau, now the seat of Sir R. W. Vaughan, Bart. It fell during the night of the 13th of July, 1813, when the weather was remarkably serene and sultry, which seems to prove the extreme age to which it must have arrived. It must have existed for many centuries; and the superstitious attributes, with which the credulity of the country had invested it, had made it as noted as it was venerable. It was known by the name of *Cwbrwa'r Ellyll*, or the Hobgoblin's Hollow Tree.

position against his former sovereign, and even to accept an embassy to the Spanish court, for the purpose of justifying the measures of the usurper. Glyndwr, therefore, had motives, independent of the general one above noticed, for wreaking his vengeance upon St. Asaph; and it would be difficult to admit, that the faithless conduct of Trevor did not merit some chastisement, however indefensible the particular one here adopted *.

When these violent outrages on the part of Glyndwr were made known to the king, he once more resolved to make an endeavour to crush him. He, accordingly, planned some formidable arrangements for the occasion; but, before he could take the field, or even collect his forces together, he received intelligence of an important victory, gained by Glyndwr over Sir Edmund Mortimer. The Welsh chieftain, after having committed the ravages to which allusion has just been made, directed his operations against the domains of the Lords Marchers, on the borders of South Wales. Among these, the estates of the Earl of March, then an infant in the custody of Henry, became, in

* The conduct of this prelate presents an extraordinary instance of vacillation. For, upon his return from Spain, in 1402, the very year in which his cathedral and palace were burnt, he deserted Henry, and, seduced by the recent successes of Glyndwr, became a partisan and confederate of that chief. This fact appears from a letter of Henry IV. addressed to Edward Charlton, Lord Powys, in which is the following passage: "quia, ex relatu plurium, intelleximus, quod Owenus de Glendourdy et Johannes, qui se pretendit episcopum Assavensem, proditores et rebelles nostri," &c. See *Rymer* and *Hollinshed*. It may be inferred, that, in consequence of this tergiversation of Trevor, he was nominally ejected from the diocese of St. Asaph by Henry, though it is probable, on the other hand, that Glyndwr was sufficiently powerful to secure to him the enjoyment of his episcopal revenues until his death, which took place at Paris, in 1410. During the last eight years of the bishop's life he seems, therefore, to have continued faithful to the cause of Glyndwr.

particular, a prey to his predatory incursions. Sir Edmund Mortimer, uncle to the young Earl, and entrusted with the protection of his property, opposed him, at the head of a large body of his nephew's dependents, near Knighton, in Radnorshire. The contest was extremely obstinate and sanguinary; but fortune at length declared in favour of Glyndwr, who, in a personal encounter with his adversary, dismounted him and took him prisoner. In addition to the capture of Sir Edmund Mortimer, the loss of eleven hundred of his men, chiefly slain on the field of battle, was the result of a victory important at once to the interests and fame of Glyndwr *.

The immediate effect of this triumph was to swell the

*. The English historians have charged the Welsh, and particularly the Welsh women, with some undefined and nameless atrocities committed on the bodies of the English that were slain in this battle. Hollinshed speaks of the "shamefull villanie used by the Welshwomen" on this occasion as being such as "eares should be ashamed to heare and continent tongs to speake thereof." And Shakespear has adopted this disgraceful accusation in the following passage:—

"When all athwart there came
A post from Wales, loaden with heavy news,
Whose worst was that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
Against the irregular and wild Glendower,
Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,
A thousand of his people butchered,
Upon whose dead corpses there was such misuse,
Such beastly, shameless, transformation,
By those Welsh women done, as may not be,
Without much shame, retold or spoken of."

Thomas de Walsingham, who wrote about forty years after the event, is the first propagator of this odious narrative; but Mr. Pennant has shewn, from another old writer, that, whatever truth there may be in it, the disgrace must be ascribed to a certain follower of Glyndwr, and not to the chieftain himself.

ranks of insurrection, and to communicate a new consequence to the character of its leader. Henry, who, from political motives, beheld with delight, or, at least, with indifference, the reverses of Mortimer *, could not, however, regard, without some apprehension, the continued successes of Glyndwr. He, therefore, renewed, with additional ardour, his preparations for attacking this obstinate enemy, who now, for more than two years, had set at defiance both his authority and his power. The Welsh chief, in the mean time, was pursuing his work of desolation in South Wales. Glamorganshire, in particular, became the victim of his unsparing revenge. Numerous castles and ecclesiastical structures, among which was the episcopal palace of Llandav, were wholly demolished. The town of Cardiff, with its various monasteries and convents, shared the same fate; and every fortress along his route, in the possession of individuals inimical to his cause, became a prey to his fury †. After this career of destruction, he returned hastily to North Wales for the purpose of defending that country against the invasion meditated by Henry.

The king had now completed the military arrangements for his enterprise against Glyndwr. His army, consisting of the levies of thirty-three counties, was divided into three

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* The Earl of March, at that time, with his brother, a prisoner in Windsor Castle, was, upon the death of Richard, the next heir to the crown, as descended from Lionel, Duke of Clarence, through Philippa, his daughter and sole heiress. He and his family, therefore, were naturally objects of jealousy to Henry, who, in his rigorous treatment of the young earl, may have said with much truth, considering the circumstances of the times, and his particular situation,—

"Res dura et regni novitas me talia cogunt."

† Among these were the town and castle of Abergavenny, and the fortresses of Crug Hywel and Tre'r Twr.

bodies, which were to be respectively stationed at Hereford, Shrewsbury, and Chester, in order to harass the Welsh at so many different points. One of these divisions was commanded by the king in person, and appears to have been the only one that made any attempt to execute the proposed plan. Glyndwr, however, was not unprepared for the attack. Having, according to his usual practice, deprived the enemy of the means of subsistence, by driving the country, he took shelter among his mountain bulwarks. The natural consequences of this system of warfare, as on previous occasions, befel the English army. Disease, famine, and discontent visited their ranks; and a most inclement season, pregnant with rains and tempests, completed the calamities of the invaders. Henry, accordingly, found himself once more under the necessity of making a disgraceful retreat; and the only consolation, left to his discomfited followers, was that their disasters had been occasioned, as they ignorantly presumed, by the supernatural machinations of the enemy, and not by his skill or his valour *.

* An old historian, in allusion to this event, says, that Glyndwr "through art magicke (as was thought) caused such foule weather of winds, tempest, raine, snow, and haile, to be raised for the annoiance of the king's armie, that the like had not been heard of." Shakespear too, who seems to have embodied, in his portrait of Glyndwr, all that was romantic or marvellous in the traditional accounts of his life and character, thus alludes to his wonder-working endowments:—

> "Where is he living clipp'd in with the sea,
> That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales,
> Who calls me pupil, or hath read to me?
> And bring him out, that is but woman's son,
> Can trace me in the tedious ways of art,
> And hold me pace in deep experiments?
> I can call spirits from the vasty deep."

It

Soon after this, the events in the north of England had united the Earls of Northumberland and Douglas in a warlike league against Henry, and it naturally occurred to them, that the alliance of Glyndwr would materially assist their designs. The family of Percy, in particular, were anxious to form this connexion, as it might be the means of procuring the release of Sir Edmund Mortimer, still a prisoner with the Welsh chief, and respecting whose ransom they had made frequent and fruitless applications to Henry, who, as already intimated, regarded the captivity of Mortimer rather with satisfaction than otherwise. Prompted by these motives, the Earl of Northumberland's son, the celebrated Hotspur, made overtures to Glyndwr, who, without hesitation, acceded to them; and the first proof of his sincerity in the cause was the unconditional release of his captive. In order to ratify this alliance, as well as to form a plan of operations, a meeting took place at the house of the Dean of Bangor, in Carnarvonshire, between Glyndwr and his two confederates, young Percy and Mortimer; on which occasion all the island, south of the Tweed, was rather prematurely divided among the aspiring triumvirate. Sir Edmund Mortimer, on the part of his nephew, as having the highest claim, was to possess all the country from the Trent to the Severn, as far as the southern and eastern boundaries of the island; to the Earl

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It was probably to the retreat of Henry, upon the occasion above noticed, that the Bard of Avon alludes in the following lines:—

> "Three times did Henry Bolingbroke make head
> Against the Welsh: thrice from the banks of Wye,
> And sandy-bottom'd Severn, did they send
> Him bootless back and weather-beaten home."

Yet, in strictness of fact, this appears to have been the fourth retreat, which Henry was compelled to make before the victorious arms of his adversary.

of Northumberland was allotted all that part of the kingdom, which lay north of the Trent; and the Lord of Glyndyvrdwy was to have all the territory westward of the Severn, in addition to the Principality of Wales, which he claimed as his by hereditary right *.

The confederate chiefs, having thus satisfactorily adjusted their preliminary measures, hastened to avail themselves of their several resources, for the purpose of consummating what they had, as they conceived, so auspiciously commenced. The first act of Glyndwr, upon this occasion, was to obtain the sanction of his countrymen to his assumption of a royal authority; and for this purpose he convoked a national assembly at Machynlleth, in Montgomeryshire, at which his title as Prince of Wales was formally recognized. The ceremony of coronation was even performed, and every thing wore the aspect of a sincere and unanimous acknowledgment of his pretensions. An incident occurred, however, to mar, in some degree, the harmony of the scene, and had nearly brought to a premature close the ambitious career of the new prince. The celebrated Sir David Gam, afterwards so deservedly distinguished in English history for his gallantry in the battle of Agincourt, was present at this meeting, under the pretence of uniting in its general object, but really, as may be assumed from the sequel, with very different views. He had

* To aid the enthusiasm, which inspired the triple confederacy upon this occasion, resort was had to an ancient prediction, which seemed to designate the overthrow of Henry, under the name of *Moldwarp* (cursed of God's own mouth) by the agency of a dragon, a lion, and a wolf. For the purpose of completing the prophecy, by the appropriation of the other names, Glyndwr assumed that of *dragon*. Percy was the *lion*, and Mortimer the *wolf*; each name adopted from some emblem or characteristic, which was, no doubt, considered happily applicable to the occasion.

been long in the service of Henry, to whom he was zealously attached; a circumstance, which might alone account for his animosity against Glyndwr, even if he had been uninfluenced by any spirit of rivalry*. But, whatever were his motives, he had conceived the base design of assassinating his countryman; and the plot was accidentally discovered when on the point of being executed. The traitor was apprehended on the spot, and would have suffered the punishment due to his perfidy, but for the intercession of some of Glyndwr's most intimate friends. His life was spared, but only at the price of his liberty. He was consigned to a dungeon†, where, in all probability, he would have ended his days, if the extinction of the rebellion had not restored him to freedom after a tedious incarceration of ten years. Glyndwr had also extorted from him an engagement of fidelity to his cause, which the captive had no opportunity of fulfilling; and, soon after his imprisonment, he destroyed his house‡.

The sovereign dignity, with which Glyndwr had thus been invested, united with the confederacy he had formed with Hotspur and Mortimer, communicated to his fortunes a degree of hope, which they had not enjoyed at any preceding period. It is evident that he now regarded all his

* Mr. Thomas, in his "Memoirs," p. 109, states, that Sir David Gam was a brother-in-law of Glyndwr, having married his sister. This is a mistake, and may have been owing originally to the circumstance of one of Glyndwr's sisters having been married to Davydd ab Ednyved Gam, a person of note in North Wales. Sir David Gam's wife was a native of Radnorshire.

† The remains of the prison, in which Glyndwr immured his captives, are still to be seen at Glyndyvrdwy, and are known by the name of "Owain Glyndwr's Prison-house." They form part of a modern dwelling, and afford, even in their ruins, ample proofs of the strength of the original building.

‡ This was Old Court, in Monmouthshire, the site of which is still to be traced between Abergaveney and Monmouth.

dreams of ambition as on the eve of being realized; but the fatal battle of Shrewsbury, which happened soon afterwards, tended, in a great degree, to dispel the illusion. The want of a preconcerted plan of operations on the part of the allied chiefs, so obvious on the occasion, was the main cause of the disasters that ensued *; and the battle was lost before Glyndwr, who was stationed at Oswestry, a distance of about eighteen miles, could bring all his force into the field. The skilful manœuvres of the English monarch, by cutting off his communication with his confederates, had compelled him to remain in a state of inactivity with the main body of his army, amounting to about twelve thousand men. He had only been able to detach a small division for the purpose; and the defeat of this, notwithstanding the bravery it evinced, with the general result of the engagement, seems, for the moment, to have paralyzed his exertions. For it is extremely probable, that, had Glyndwr taken advantage of the exhausted state of Henry's troops immediately after the battle, while his own were in so fresh a condition, he might, with the co-operation of what yet remained of the forces of the confederates, have torn the laurels from the brows of the conquerors. But a desultory system of warfare seems, on all occasions, to have been most congenial with his disposition †. Ac-

* It is said, that Hotspur, previous to the battle, solicited an interview with Glyndwr, which the latter declined. Whether this be true or not, it is certain that there was an obvious want of concert between the insurgent leaders. Mutual jealousies had, perhaps, succeeded to the sanguine anticipations with which the league was at first formed.

† If this were not so evident as it is from the whole history of Glyndwr's insurrection, it would be sufficiently obvious from the following document, to which allusion was made in the early part of this memoir, as being hitherto, in all probability, unpublished. It appears to have been a sort of circular invitation addressed by Glyndwr to some of his principal partisans.

cordingly in the present instance, as soon as the
army had quitted their position, he seized the opp
to carry through the neighbouring country all the
of pillage and conflagration, the Lords Marchers
as usual, the principal sufferers.

Such, at this moment, was the impoverished st
Henry's finances, that he could make no effective resi
to the desolating career of the Welsh chieftain. H
obliged to restrict his hostility to measures of a def
character; with which view he repaired and fortified a
castles, possessed by the English, in Wales or the vic
and entrusted their defence to individuals of approved
rage and fidelity, with strict injunctions to employ all
means in opposing the attacks of Glyndwr, who seem

The original, of which a transcript exists among the "Myvyrian MSS.
longing to the Cymmrodorion, is in the doggrel Latin of the age to whi
relates. The following is a translation:—"We send you our love and gr
ing, as we hope, that, by God's and your assistance, we shall be able to
liver the Welsh nation from the yoke of our enemies the English, who h
long time oppressed us and our ancestors. And be assured, that, accord
to all appearance, the time of their glory is past, and that victory and t
umph are turning to our side, so that nothing but sloth or discord can pr
vent us from having undoubted success. Agreeably to this, we demand, w
require, and even entreat you to summon all resolution, and boldly to com
to our aid to whatever place ye shall hear *is ravaged by conflagration an
slaughter, as we hope to effect such things on our march*, and that, by God's help
shortly. This we entreat you not to neglect, as you value your liberty and
honour. You could not be blamed, indeed, for your former absence, as you
had not received a general intimation previous to our first insurrection; for
we were under the necessity of rising on the first attack of fear and danger.
Farewell! May God defend you from evil! OWAIN AB GRUFFYDD, *Lord of
Glyndyrdwy*."—It must be manifest from the whole tenour of this letter, that
it was written in a moment of exultation, immediately after one of Glyn-
dwr's most important triumphs, but before he had assumed the title of
"Prince of Wales." However, the date is unfortunately wanting, and can-
not now be satisfactorily supplied.

the mean time, to have been pursuing his predatory career unmolested.

Soon after this a treaty, offensive and defensive, was formed between Glyndwr and the king of France, who, having never acknowledged the justice of Henry's title to the English crown, was glad to avail himself of this opportunity to unite, against him, with one, who had proved himself so persevering, if not formidable, in his hostility, as the Welsh chieftain. Accordingly, the latter dispatched ambassadors to France for the purpose of arranging the terms of the treaty, which was signed at Paris on the 14th of June, 1404, and received the ratification of Glyndwr on the 12th of January in the following year*. This confederacy with so powerful a sovereign as the French king may be supposed to have communicated a new importance to Glyndwr's cause; but the sequel proves, that this importance was rather nominal than real. Glyndwr had now reached the crisis of his fortunes, and, whatever partial successes marked his future career, his union with France does not appear to have given birth to one solid triumph.

The commencement of the year 1405 was distinguished by some vigorous operations on the part of Glyndwr against the fortresses possessed by the English in Wales, several of which he took, dismantling some and retaining others. Among these were the celebrated castles of Harlech and Aberystwith, in the counties of Merioneth and Cardigan, which were not surpassed by any fortifications in the Principality in the natural and artificial advantages, which

* This ratification took place at the castle of Llanbadarn, near Aberystwith, in Cardiganshire. The individuals, whom Glyndwr appointed as his plenipotentiaries at Paris, for the purpose of arranging the preliminaries of the treaty, were Gruffydd Yonge, LL. D., and his brother-in-law, Sir John Hanmer.

they combined*. Glyndwr's next operations were not of so favourable a character; for, upon marching into Montgomeryshire, after the successes just noticed, he was suddenly encountered by an English army under the command of the Earl of Warwick, by whom he was compelled to retreat with the loss of many of his followers. But this disaster was in a great degree compensated by a triumph, which he soon afterwards gained over the English troops at a place called Craig y Dorth, in the vicinity of Monmouth†.

Soon after this, however, our hero experienced the reverses of fortune, whose favours he was not destined again to enjoy, in any extraordinary degree. A party of his followers, to the number of eight thousand, had been collected in South Wales, where, agreeably with the practice of the age, they committed great devastations, burning, in their route, such towns and fortresses as were inimical to their cause. They had not long pursued their career of destruction, before they were encountered by a much inferior force of English, under the command of Sir Gilbert Talbot. An engagement ensued; but, the English, who gave no quarter, completely routed the Welsh troops, notwithstanding the superiority of their numbers; and the loss of a thousand men, slain on the field, was the result of this decisive defeat. Glyndwr, however, made immediate ex-

* Harlech was, anciently, a celebrated fortress of an almost impregnable nature, and is supposed to have been founded by Maelgwn Gwynedd about the year 581. Its original name was Twr Bronwen, or Bronwen's Tower; and it was afterwards called Caer Collwyn, the Fortress of Collwyn, from Collwyn ab Tangno, head of one of the fifteen tribes of North Wales, who resided there during the eighth century.

† Craig y Dorth lies between Chepstow and Monmouth, at a short distance from Treleg Common.

ertions to repair this misfortune. He dispatched a large body of men under the command of his son Gruffydd, who hazarded another battle with the English only four days after the date of the last*. But the result was most disastrous. Not only were fifteen hundred men killed or taken prisoners; but the Welsh chief had also to bewail the captivity of his son, and the death of his brother Tudur, whose near resemblance to Glyndwr occasioned the conquerors at first to exult in the supposed overthrow of the Welsh prince himself. Their joy, however, was but of a transient nature; for, upon the body being examined, it was found to want a wart over the eye, by which the brothers were distinguished from each other. The battle, here noticed, was fought at a place called Mynydd-y-Pwll-Melyn, in Brecknockshire, according to the most received authority; but some writers place the scene of action at Uske, in the county of Monmouth. The difference between these two accounts is not worth reconciling, even if it were possible. It is enough to know, that this engagement, wherever fought, proved a death-blow to the aspiring hopes of the lord of Glyndyvrdwy.

The fatal battle of Mynydd-y-Pwll-Melyn was followed by a state of great destitution on the part of Glyndwr. The certainty of his defeat, and the rumour of his death, had caused almost all his principal followers to abandon the standard of insurrection; and the chieftain was driven to the melancholy extremity of seeking an asylum in caverns and desert places, from which he occasionally ventured forth to visit a few faithful friends, who supplied him with the common necessaries of life. Tradition has com-

* The first battle was fought on the 11th of March, and the second on the 15th of the same month.

memorated two caves, one in Carnarvonshire, and the other in Merionethshire, as forming the gloomy residence of the Welsh chief during this part of his existence*. How long he continued thus to lead the life of an anchorite does not appear; but his retreat was certainly of no very long duration. For in the same year, in which he experienced the defeat last related, we find him in active alliance with the French forces that had arrived in South Wales, in conformity with the treaty concluded between Glyndwr and the king of France. An army of twelve thousand men landed at Milford Haven, for the purpose of co-operating with Glyndwr; and the followers of the latter had so far rallied as to enable him to join them with a force of ten thousand men.

This junction of the French and Welsh forces took place at Tenby in Pembrokeshire; and their first operations appear to have been directed against the town of Carmarthen, which, either from the imperfect state of its garrison, or its friendly disposition towards Glyndwr, fell an easy prey to the besiegers. From this place the united army marched towards Worcester, and, on their arrival there, burnt a great part of the town, and laid waste the surrounding country. Henry, being apprised of these proceedings, determined to march in person against the invaders. The latter, in the meantime, had advanced beyond Worcester, and had exposed the country to all the ravages consequent on the incursion of a hostile army. Upon

* A cavern near the sea-side, in the parish of Llangelynin, in Merionethshire, still preserves the name of Ogov Owain, or Owen's Cave, and must have been one of his places of concealment. He is said to have been secretly supported there by one Ednyved ab Aron, an individual of distinction in that part of the country. Another of the fugitive chieftain's haunts on this occasion was Moel Hebog, near Beddgelert, in Carnarvonshire.

hearing, however, of the advance of the English, the allied forces suddenly retreated, and took up a position about nine miles from Worcester, on the Welsh side of that city. The camp of Glyndwr is said to have occupied a part of Wobury Hill, which may be supposed to have been selected in conformity with the common practice of the Welsh chieftains, as well as for the advantages it presented from its contiguity to the borders of Wales. Although the allies and the English continued on this occasion to menace each other for several days, it does not appear that any general action took place. There were, indeed, some warm skirmishes, in which the loss, on the side of the French and English, is recorded as nearly equal. With respect to Glyndwr, there is no authority for supposing that he was at all engaged: he seems, with an unaccountable caution, to have remained wholly inactive for eight days after the arrival of the English, when he made a sudden nocturnal retreat into Wales, where he was soon followed by his allies. The historians of this period, it should be observed, are somewhat at variance as to the events now under consideration, some ascribing the first retrograde movement to Henry, and others to his enemies*. From concurrent circumstances, the latter conclusion seems

* Among the conflicting testimonies on this point are those of Monstrelet and Hall. The former attaches the opprobrium of the first retreat to Henry, who, he says, was attacked on the occasion by the French, who captured eighteen provision-waggons. Hall, an English historian, on the other hand, relates, that Henry "chased the enemy from hilles to dales, from dales to wodes, from wodes to marishes, and yet could never have them to any advantage." But he afterwards admits, that, in his retreat, he lost "certayn cariges laden with vitayle, to his great displeasure, and to the great comforte of the Welsh." Hall thus appears to agree, in one particular, with Monstrelet, with the variation, indeed, of making the Welsh the captors instead of the French.

the most probable, while it must, on the other hand, be admitted, that, whatever success may have attended the arms of the English monarch, he was not in a condition to pursue his triumph. After having made formidable preparations for again invading the Principality, he suddenly relinquished his design, awed perhaps by the approach of winter, and the experience of former similar enterprises, from which he had reaped neither advantage nor glory.

The French, upon their retirement into Wales, seem to have grown weary of the cause in which they had embarked, and which, in its results, had proved of so barren a nature. For, after passing a few months longer in a state of inactivity, they returned to France; and thus terminated an alliance, which tended, in no respect, to fortify the interests of Glyndwr. The light of hope was, for a moment, awakened; but it vanished only to leave a gloom more disheartening than what had preceded it.

It may here be proper to mention, that it forms no part of the object of this memoir to enter into a minute detail of all the transactions connected with the insurrection of Glyndwr, and especially of those, in which he was not personally concerned. Accordingly, several sieges and devastations, consequent on this protracted hostility, have been passed without notice; but they have, for the most part, been such as related only to the partisans of the Welsh chief. The aim of these pages is to convey rather a memorial of the man than of the times in which he lived, which, however fertile in events of interest to the historian, cannot, in this point of view, be embraced within the plan of the biographer*.

* It is not intended that this remark should have any reference to the "Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr," by Mr. Thomas, already alluded to, which

It was in the spring of the year 1406 that the French troops abandoned Wales; but their place was speedily supplied by another reinforcement, the remnant of a much larger body, that had left the French shores, and which, on its passage, had been taken or dispersed by the English*. However seasonable these succours might have proved under different circumstances, it does not appear that Glyndwr was at present in a condition to turn them to any advantage. His friends and partisans were rapidly forsaking him; and, among the most important defections of this nature, was the revolt of the inhabitants of Ystrad Tywy, in Carmarthenshire, who, from their numbers and martial character, had been regarded among his most powerful auxiliaries.

About this period the Earl of Northumberland and Lord Bardolf, who had been exiles in Scotland, having reason to suspect the fidelity of the inhabitants, removed to Wales, where they hoped, under the auspices of Glyndwr, to find a more secure asylum. They were received by him with all the hospitality, for which he was distinguished, and which they continued to enjoy until the following year, when the still declining fortunes of their friend induced them to seek a new retreat. And it is probable,

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was obviously designed rather as an historical view of the affairs of Wales during the time of Glyndwr, as well as before and after that period, than as a mere biographical sketch of the Welsh chieftain himself. The plan of the CAMBRIAN PLUTARCH, however, does not admit of so extensive a dissertation.

* The French fleet on this occasion consisted of thirty-eight sail, eight of which, laden with troops, were captured by the English. The remainder escaped in the greatest confusion. It does not appear what number arrived safely at their destination, or, indeed, whether the troops they conveyed took any active part on the side of Glyndwr.

that, on this occasion, they were influenced as much by a delicate disinclination to be any longer burthensome to their generous protector in the hour of adversity, as by any anxiety to provide for their own safety.

Notwithstanding the reverses of the Welsh chieftain, it appears, that he still asserted his regal or rather princely pretensions, as is manifest from a pardon granted, at this time, to some of his countrymen, on which occasion the official instrument is dated in the "sixth year of his reign*." But this was only an effort to retain the shadow when the substance had disappeared. The subsequent years of our hero's existence present little more than a continued series of desultory warfare, directed to no other end than the persecution of such individuals, as continued firm in their allegiance to Henry, or as had forsaken his own standard. The Lords Marchers, as on former occasions, were peculiarly exposed to his predatory attacks, several of the towns and fortresses in their possession having suffered severely; and, in order the more effectually to execute his plans, Glyndwr succeeded in forming a truce with some of these nobles, that he might, with the greater facility, harass the rest. Lord Grey, the original cause of the insurrection, appears to have been included in the number of those, whom Glyndwr had thus rendered subservient to his designs. Henry, when apprised of the fact, dispatched imperative orders, that all pacific arrangements, formed between the Lords Marchers and Glyndwr, should be annulled, and, that the former should employ all their forces

* The pardon, alluded to, was granted to John ab Hywel ab Ieuan Goch, and is dated at Cevn Llanvair on the 10th of January. On the seal of the instrument was the portrait of Glyndwr, holding a sceptre in his right hand, and a globe in his left.

to crush what still remained unsubdued of this obstinate rebellion.

This edict, we may presume, had the desired effect, at least so far as to mitigate the violence of the Welsh chieftain's hostility. For, immediately after this period, his warlike operations were merely of a defensive character. He seems to have retired among his mountain bulwarks, unconquered indeed in spirit, but greatly weakened in power, and deserted by most of his followers.

Such was the condition of Glyndwr when, in the year 1413, Henry V. ascended the English throne. This prince, we have seen, had been particularly active in his earlier years, in his opposition to the Welsh insurgents; but, upon assuming the regal dignity, he does not appear to have been actuated by any remarkable animosity against his former antagonists. His attention, indeed, was, at the moment, almost wholly absorbed by his projects against France; and the conquest of Glyndwr was regarded as an object of comparatively little importance. The Welsh chief meantime remained secure in his alpine retreat, unwilling or unable to attempt any enterprise of a formidable description.

The remaining portion of Glyndwr's life was chiefly devoted to the same predatory and irregular warfare, to which his hostility had latterly been confined. His impregnable position among the mountains favoured enterprises of this character, and there is reason to believe, that they were also too congenial with his natural inclination. But, although he had thus ceased to carry on his hostile designs on an extended scale, it may be inferred, that he was still regarded by the English government as an enemy, whom it was worth while to conciliate, and that his fortunes, accordingly, were not reduced to that state of abso-

lute desperation, which some writers pretend*. For, in the year 1415, Sir Gilbert Talbot, who had been opposed to Glyndwr in the field, was deputed by Henry to negociate with him on terms, which secured his personal safety, and that of such of his partisans as still remained faithful to him. Whether Glyndwr lived to enjoy the benefit of this treaty, or, indeed, whether it was even ratified during his life, does not appear†. One thing only is certain, that, on the 20th of September, 1415, this last champion of Welsh independence terminated his earthly career, in the sixty-first year of his age‡; and, according to the most probable testimony, his death took place at the house of one of his daughters in Herefordshire. The more popular tradition appropriates the event to Monington, which was the residence of his youngest daughter, who had been married to Roger Monington of that place, and where, it is said,

* The monkish historians of this period ascribe to the latter years of Glyndwr's life the most extreme wretchedness, representing him as enduring all the miseries of a fugitive and an outcast. This, however, is totally at variance with the negociation proposed by Henry V., who certainly would not have condescended to treat with a man in such desperate circumstances. It is probable, that the writers in question have transferred to the close of Glyndwr's life the sufferings which he endured immediately after the battle of Mynydd-y-Pwll-Melin, in 1405, as already related.

† The treaty was, however, renewed, after the death of Glyndwr, with his son Meredydd. The event happened on the 24th of February, 1416, and may be regarded as the closing scene of this protracted and turbulent drama.

‡ The year of Glyndwr's death, as well as that of his insurrection, is faithfully preserved in the following *englyn*.

Mil a phedwar cant, nid mwy,—cov ydyw,
Cyvodiad Glyndyvrdwy;
A phymtheg, praf ei safwy,
Bu Owain heu byw yn hwy.

This contradicts the statement of Rapin, who says he died in 1417.

Glyndwr was interred*. But, as this honour is also claimed by Kentchurch, in the same county, where another of his daughters lived, the only conclusion, to be drawn from these conflicting pretensions, is, that Herefordshire was, as Rapin asserts, the scene of his death. Nor can any thing be more probable, than that, in his latter hours, he should have sought in the arms of his children that repose, which fifteen years of turbulent activity had rendered so necessary.

The children of Glyndwr have already been incidentally noticed. By his marriage with the daughter of Sir David Hanmer he appears to have had several, both sons and daughters. The number of the former is uncertain, and we have no particular memorials of their fate, any farther than that some of them fought, and, most probably, fell in their father's cause. One, however, at least, as we have seen by a preceding note, survived him. His daughters were five in number, and were all married; the eldest, Isabel, to Adda ab Iorwerth Ddu; the second, Alicia, to Sir John Scudamore, of Kentchurch; the third, Janet, to John Crofts, of Croft Castle, in Herefordshire; the fourth, Jane, as we have already seen, to Lord Grey; and the youngest, Margaret, to Roger Monington, above noticed. Glyndwr had also some illegitimate children, chiefly daughters, who were married to persons of respectable family in the Principality. The name of but one son, Ieuan, has been preserved, and this is the only memorial of him.

The usual residence of Glyndwr, as before-mentioned,

* It is stated upon the authority of the Harleian MSS., in the British Museum, that the supposed body of Glyndwr was discovered at Monington, upon rebuilding the church in the year 1680, that it was entire, and of "goodly stature." But the account is too vague to be entitled to much credit.

was Sycharth, respecting the particular site of which there may be some doubt. A celebrated writer* places it in the valley of the Dee, three miles below Corwen, and makes no hesitation in identifying this as the spot, where the chieftain received Iolo, his devoted bard, in whose strains the place is described with so much minuteness. It has, on the other hand, been surmised, with a considerable degree of plausibility, that the Sycharth, commemorated by the poet, was in the parish of Llansilin, in Denbighshire, about twelve miles south-east of Glyndyvrdwy†. Glyndwr, it is known, possessed domains in both these places; and it is, therefore, natural to conclude that he had a mansion in each. And it must be admitted, that the one called Sycharth, which forms the particular subject of Iolo's "Invitation Poem," was, most probably, situate in Llansilin, on the small river Cynllaith, where the name is retained to this day, and where other peculiarities harmonize, in a remarkable manner, with the poet's description‡. But the point cannot now be satisfactorily determined: there is ample room, however, for the ingenuity of conjecture.

In person the subject of this memoir has been described as tall and athletic; in his deportment dignified; and, in his manners easy, courteous, and prepossessing. His natural endowments were, it is probable, of a highly respect-

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* Mr. Pennant. † See the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 458.

‡ This is particularly remarkable in the presumed site of Sycharth, as still to be traced in Llansilin, and in the park, mill, and fish-ponds, evident remains of which are yet to be seen on the same spot. But none of these characteristics, so minutely described by Iolo, are to be traced, or, at least, by no means so satisfactorily on the banks of the Dee. Yet, after all, the matter may be of no great importance; or, if it be, it does not rest with us to decide it.—*Non nostrum tantas componere lites.*

able character; and with these he must have united such borrowed attainments as belonged, in that age, to individuals of his station. At least, it may be assumed, from his early residence in the court of Richard II., and his particular employment near that monarch's person, that he was well skilled in the accomplishments of a military life. His talents as a warrior were not, however, it may be admitted, of the highest order; but it is certain, that he combined with unquestionable courage a great share of policy and circumspection. His military views, indeed, were generally too much distinguished by the cautiousness of their character; yet, what they may have wanted in grandeur of design was often supplied by the boldness and effectiveness of their execution. His operations were, for the most part, of an isolated nature, directed rather to secure some particular objects, than to promote the general interests of his cause. He seemed, therefore, to fight more to avenge his private wrongs than to vindicate the liberties of his country, though it is certain that these latter were never absent from his regard. But the feudal characteristics of the age, and the various factions that divided the country, made it impossible for him to appear wholly disinterested. Nor should it be forgotten, that his patriotic struggle, long and arduous as it was, had its source in his own personal injuries.

Of the more general character of Glyndwr we have but few traits. We have seen that he was superstitious, but this was a fault of the times, and in which, it is probable, he participated frequently as much from policy as inclination. His most conspicuous failings appear to have been the irascibility and vindictiveness of his temper, to which, however, must be opposed a warmth of heart, which ensured the sincerity of his attachments. In this respect he

united those opposite, yet not incongenial, extremes of character, which generally distinguish his countrymen. If he was unforgiving in his enmities, he was not less ardent in his friendships. In domestic life, as we have already seen, his hospitality was unlimited, and the general patronage he extended towards the bards, proves unquestionably the natural liberality of his sentiments. In the encouragement of the national muse, indeed, he evinced an enlightened enthusiasm, worthy of the best ages of Welsh independence.

Such was Owain Glyndwr, and, in whatever view we may regard him, he will appear as the most eminent character which his country produced during the age in which he lived. Born to a private station, he elevated himself, by his own unaided energies, to the rank of a warrior and a conqueror, maintaining an obstinate contest, during fifteen years, against all the resources of a powerful monarchy, as well as against the private factions by which he was surrounded at home. The accomplishment of such a task, notwithstanding its ultimate issue, denotes him to have possessed no ordinary qualifications: it proves, at least, that he was bold, persevering, and ardent, in the pursuit of his object. And, if, with this, we consider the sincerity of his belief in the justice of his cause, we shall find it difficult to appropriate to his memory the odium which commonly attaches itself to unsuccessful treason. They, who regard Owain Glyndwr as a traitor, ought to keep in mind that his sword was only drawn against an usurper, and that whatever excesses marked his military career may find ample palliation in the injustice which had provoked them.

SIR RHYS AB THOMAS*.

AMONG the natives of Wales, who acquired any distinction during the fifteenth century, the subject of this memoir merits an eminent place. Whether we contemplate him with reference to his rank, his endowments, or the part he acted in the political transactions of that period, we shall find his claim on our notice to be of an imperative nature. Descended from a long line of illustrious ancestors, he was indebted to his personal qualities for a reputation, which even eclipsed the nobleness of his birth.

Rhys ab Thomas, for it was not until in after life that he acquired his titular designation, claimed a lineal descent from Urien Rheged, an illustrious chieftain, contemporary with Arthur, and of whom some notice occurs in a preceding memoir†. In the female line he also numbered among his ancestors Elystan Glodrydd, head of one of the five royal tribes of the Principality‡. His paternal grand-

* This memoir, it may be right to premise, is principally indebted for the facts, upon which it is founded, to a curious life of Sir Rhys ab Thomas, written in the reign of James I. by a person, who appears to have claimed some relationship with the family. This production may be seen in the first volume of the *Cambrian Register*, and, notwithstanding its quaint and pedantic style, must be regarded as an interesting memorial of the times in which it was written.

† See page 58, *suprà*. A grandson of Rhys ab Thomas, in the reign of that capricious tyrant Henry VIII., lost his head for assuming the name of Fitzrurien, which Henry was pleased to consider as an indication of his intention to aspire to the sovereignty of Wales. This ancient family, it may be here noticed, is now represented by Lord Dynevor, of Dynevor Castle, Carmarthenshire.

‡ Elystan Glodrydd lived in the tenth century, and is recorded, in the Historical Triads, as one of the "three band-wearing princes of Britain."

father was Gruffydd ab Nicholas, so celebrated for his munificent patronage of the poets and minstrels of his time, and who fell in the contests between the houses of York and Lancaster, in which he was engaged as an active partisan of the Yorkists. Thomas ab Gruffydd, the eldest son of this individual, was the father of Rhys ab Thomas. Being averse to the political feuds in which the country was then embroiled, he retired to Burgundy, where he distinguished himself by his skill in the chivalrous accomplishments of the age, and was for a considerable time in particular favour with the reigning duke, Philip the Good. An affair of gallantry, however, in which he became involved with a near relative of that prince, compelled him to return rather suddenly to Wales, where, after being engaged in several personal combats, according to the rude manners of the times, he had the misfortune to fall under the hands of an assassin*.

The subject of this memoir was the third son of Thomas ab Gruffydd, by a daughter of Sir John Griffith, of Abermarlais, in Carmarthenshire. His two elder brothers, Morgan and David, ended their days, soon after the death of their father, in some of the sanguinary affrays arising from the politics of the times, to which Wales was so miserably exposed. The brothers had espoused opposite sides, and there is some ground for believing, that they fell while actually confronted to each other in the prosecution of this unnatural struggle.

Rhys ab Thomas first saw the light at Abermarlais, in

His territory was situated in that part of the country which lies between the Severn and Wye. He was also lord of Hereford in right of his mother.

* This happened at Pennal, in Merionethshire, just after a personal encounter, in which he had been successful. Being exhausted, however, by loss of blood, he lay down, and, while in this situation, was stabbed unawares by a servant or friend of his adversary.

Carmarthenshire, in the year 1451; and his father appears, on his birth, to have entertained some extraordinary presage of his future celebrity. At least, it is certain, that, yielding to his superstitious feelings in this respect, he had recourse to the occult wisdom of the astrologer, to satisfy his paternal solicitude respecting the destiny of his child; and the oracular responses he received gave a countenance to his most flattering anticipations. Elated by what he regarded as a preternatural assurance on a subject so interesting, he determined to spare no pains or expense in the education of his son; and young Rhys, while yet in his infancy, was placed under the care of Dr. Lewis, a physician, whose talents and attainments rendered him subsequently a prominent character in the political drama then acted*. From this person Rhys received his earliest instruction, and, it is probable, continued under his tuition for some years; but, when his father removed to Burgundy, as already related, his favourite child was the companion of his travels, and his education was completed in that country. The court of Burgundy was, at this period, remarkable, above most others in Europe, for the patterns of chivalry in which it abounded†; and young Rhys, by his proficiency in the fashionable pursuits of the age, and particularly in feats of horsemanship and arms, and other athletic exercises, soon shone a conspicuous luminary amidst the splendid constellation in which he was placed. His merits, which became the subject of general admiration, at length attrac-

* Dr. Lewis was a native of North Wales, and received his education in the University of Padua.

† The period, to which this observation has reference, could not have been very long antecedent to the dismemberment of the Duchy of Burgundy, which happened in the year 1477, when part of it was annexed to the throne of France, and the remainder was seized by the Germans.

ted the personal notice of the Duke, who took him under his own immediate protection.

Rhys soon profited in an eminent degree by the advantages he now enjoyed, and so much ingratiated himself with his patron, who had made him the companion of his only son, that he appeared to be in the high road to preferment and honour. But this bright promise was destined to be nipped in the bud; for, after he had risen rapidly to the rank of captain from that of a private soldier*, the indiscretion of his father, previously noticed, made it necessary for him to return in haste to his native country, and it was the lot of Rhys to accompany him in his flight.

In no very long time after this event, Thomas ab Gruffydd and his two eldest sons died in the manner already described, and Rhys succeeded, in consequence, to the possession of his patrimonial estates. His first care, upon being thus at full liberty to act for himself, was to make choice of some persons, most remarkable for their wisdom or experience, upon whose counsel he might rely, as well in the management of his private affairs, as in his general deportment in the political contests of the times. This measure indicated in Rhys a degree of discretion far beyond his years; and it was his good fortune soon to experience the benefit of it. A deep-rooted enmity had existed between his father and one Henry ab Gwilym, of Court Henry, in Carmarthenshire, who was of an ancient and respectable family, and was also distinguished by his personal qualities, and the influence he possessed in that part of the country. Family feuds of this nature were, formerly, of common occurrence in Wales,

* It was by his own choice that Rhys was originally placed in a subordinate rank; for the Duke would at first have bestowed upon him the command of a troop of horse, but he modestly declined it, as too much for his youth and inexperience.

and, owing to the laxity of the laws, were generally productive of the most fatal results. In the present instance, there had been many obstinate contests between Thomas ab Gruffydd and his adversary; and the persons, whom Rhys had selected as his advisers, were naturally apprehensive that the quarrel might be continued in the son. For the purpose of preventing what could not but prove highly injurious to the interests of their young *protegé*, they resolved upon attempting a reconciliation; and, with this view, they proposed a matrimonial alliance between the two families. It fortunately happened that the proposal met on each side with the most cordial reception, and Rhys was soon afterwards united in marriage with Eva, daughter and coheiress of Henry ab Gwilym. Independent of the extinction of the old family animosities, which was the natural fruit of this auspicious union, it had the effect also, by considerably augmenting the property of Rhys, of strengthening his local interests in a very essential degree.

Immediately after his marriage, the subject of this memoir appears to have devoted himself entirely to the arrangement of his private affairs, and, more especially, of his domestic economy, in which he established regulations of the most liberal nature, tempered at the same time by a due regard to the extent of his resources*. Having thus adopt-

* Such, his biographer tells us, was the system of hospitality he had adopted, that "the gentry did continually flock to his house, as to some academy, for their civil nurture and education; by which means his house was so much frequented, and he so well attended, that, wherever he came, in respect of the greatness of his train, he bare shew rather of a prince than a private subject." But, notwithstanding the expense which this liberality must necessarily have entailed on him, the writer adds, that his judgment in the management of his affairs was so great, that "his hospitality no way abated or diminished, shewing the middle way between base avarice and vicious prodigality."

ed a system of living suitable with his rank and the manners of the age, he next directed his attention to the condition of his countrymen, which stood much in need of amelioration. A long series of intestine broils had introduced among the lower classes a general contempt of social order and all the common decencies of civilized life. Their chief enjoyment was centred in such acts of violence as resulted from the jealousies and dissensions then prevailing. To remove these abuses, and substitute a system of good order in their stead, became now the avowed object of Rhys; and with this view, he had recourse to the assistance of the Bishop of St. David's, one of his chosen friends, who readily acquiesced in his views. The worthy prelate began his work of improvement by reforming, within his diocese, the service of the established church, which had been, for some time before, much neglected. The dissemination of a religious spirit throughout the country was the natural consequence of this prudent measure; and Rhys beheld with pleasure the auspicious accomplishment of the first and most important part of his benevolent project. His next care was to establish public games and diversions, for the purpose of alluring the people from the unsocial and turbulent occupations in which they had so long indulged. And, in order the more readily to induce them to adopt his plan, he was frequently in the habit of taking part himself in the athletic exercises of the occasion*.

* The following is the quaint and curious description, which the biographer of Rhys ab Thomas gives of his conduct on this occasion :—"And, because by conversation familiarity is increased, and courtesy engendered, they (Rhys and his advisers), in imitation of the ancient law-makers, instituted certain festival days, to the end that men should assemble together, or entertain public sports; and places of meeting were appointed, and summer-houses erected, where the women, with dancing and other allowable

By this patriotic and politic conduct, he ingratiated himself, in a remarkable manner, with his dependants and countrymen generally. So great, indeed, was his popularity, that he was able, according to the statement of his biographer, to bring into the field, on any sudden emergency, a force of four or five thousand horse, consisting, for the most part, of voluntary contributions. The ability to command so large a body must, in those troubled times, and particularly with reference to the feudal and independent mode of warfare then in use, have rendered his friendship as desirable as his hostility must have been dangerous. Nor were the tributary supplies of his countrymen confined to those of a mere military nature; they also forced upon his acceptance portions of land to a considerable extent, which, when added to his previous possessions, rendered him the most powerful territorial proprietor in that part of the Principality*.

Such was the prosperous condition of the affairs of Rhys ab Thomas, when the Duke of Buckingham and others had entered into a conspiracy for dethroning Richard III. and placing the crown on the head of the Earl of Richmond.

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recreations, passed the time, and the men exercised all manly actions, as running, quoiting, leaping, wrestling, and the like; among whom this young Rhys ever made one, not refusing sometimes to decline his gravity, and to dance among his neighbours, but that was seldom, and then too with a decent and comely behaviour." It is hardly necessary to mention, that neither in this extract, nor in those in the preceding note, is the orthography of the original observed.

* The portions of land, here alluded to, were given generally in exchange for horses, with which Rhys supplied all those who attached themselves to him. The land, as being the donation of so many different people, was necessarily widely scattered, and often selected from the midst of larger estates. It is possible that this custom prevailed in other instances, as there still exists, in some parts of South Wales, a remarkable intermixture of property, where isolated patches of land frequently belong to persons having no other property within several miles of them.

Buckingham, it is well known, had been rewarded for his services to Richard, whom he had been mainly instrumental in raising to his kingly dignity, with several confiscated estates in the Marches of South Wales, as well as with a considerable authority in those parts. Some time previous to his formation of the plot for the overthrow of his former master, he had, by some arbitrary assumption of power, given deep offence to Rhys ab Thomas, between whose family and the Duke there had existed before a serious misunderstanding, which, it is probable, the extreme popularity of Rhys, by rendering him an object of jealousy to this ambitious nobleman, had tended, on his part at least, materially to enhance. When his scheme, however, for the introduction of Richmond, then in France, to the English throne, was nearly ripe for execution, he felt that a reconciliation with Rhys would be almost indispensable to its success. For, as there was no part of the English coast on which the new monarch could securely land, it remained that his only chance of an unobstructed disembarkation would be in Wales. Yet, as long as Rhys continued true to the reigning king, this appeared impossible: it, therefore, formed one of Buckingham's first objects to gain over that individual to his cause. The accomplishment of this desirable result was, however, likely to be attended with much difficulty; for not only did the still existing enmity between Rhys and the Duke present a formidable impediment, but the former had, about this time, renewed to Richard the assurance of his loyalty, in terms the most earnest and unequivocal.

As soon as the king was apprised of the full extent and design of Buckingham's conspiracy, he was seized with the apprehensions so natural to his peculiar situation, and had resort to every expedient to ward off the impending danger.

From those, whose power placed them above the influence of his bribes or menaces, he was content to exact a new pledge of their fidelity and attachment. Among this number was the subject of the present memoir, from whom Richard directed his Commissioners in South Wales to take a fresh oath of allegiance, and, at the same time, to require his only son as a hostage for its faithful performance. Rhys complied with the first part of the condition, but could not consent to part with his child, then only in his fifth year. He, accordingly, wrote a letter to the king, to excuse a compliance with his wishes in this respect, urging the tender age of the boy, with all those other arguments, which the affection of a parent for an only son may be supposed to supply. The application, in all probability, had the desired effect; for it does not appear that Richard persisted in the exaction of this stipulation, and which he, perhaps, considered the less necessary, in consequence of the solemn protestations of loyalty conveyed by Rhys's letter, in which the writer declared, with reference to the apprehended invasion by the Earl of Richmond, that "whoever, ill affected to the state, should dare to land in those parts of Wales, where he had any employment under his Majesty, must resolve with himself to make his entrance and irruption over his body"*.

The pledge, thus made by Rhys, seemed by no means calculated to prepare him for giving a favourable reception to the overtures of the Duke of Buckingham, even if he had not been influenced by his personal dislike of that nobleman. The Duke, however, who was, most probably, aware of the obstacles he should have to encounter, employ-

* The letter, here alluded to, is dated "Carmarthen Castle, 1484," the year preceding the landing of the Earl of Richmond, at Milford.

ed, as his mediator on the occasion, a person who, of all others, was most likely to bring the affair to a successful issue. This was Dr. Lewis, Rhys's former tutor, whom the Countess of Richmond, mother of Henry VII., had selected as her confidential agent in those intrigues which preceded the establishment of her son on the English throne. The Doctor found his old pupil at his castle of Abermarlais, on the eve of departing for Brecon, for the purpose of bringing the inveterate quarrel between Buckingham and himself to a decision, by an appeal to arms, for which he had made formidable preparations. It was scarcely possible for the negotiator to have arrived at a more inauspicious juncture; yet, such was his address, or the influence he possessed over Rhys, that, after a long interview, in the course of which he apprised him of the plans in agitation for the public welfare, and urged him, on this account, to refrain, at least, from his hostile intentions, he so far succeeded as to prevail upon Rhys even to assent to a reconciliation with the Duke. The parties soon afterwards met for the purpose, and the differences, that had existed, were adjusted with apparent sincerity and satisfaction.

The main point, however, still remained to be accomplished. Although the old variance between Buckingham and Rhys was thus terminated, it was not as yet succeeded by any cordial alliance; and the Duke still felt, that, without his new friend's active co-operation, the success of his project would be extremely doubtful. Dr. Lewis was, accordingly, instructed to proceed in the work he had so happily begun; but this zealous mediator, unwilling to trust entirely to his own powers, communicated the design to the Bishop of St. David's* and one or two others, whom

* It does not exactly appear who filled the See of St. David's at the

Rhys, as already noticed, had selected as his confidential advisers, and solicited their aid in the task he had undertaken. To this they readily assented, and availed themselves of an occasion to make their first effort, when Rhys was reflecting with some feelings of dissatisfaction on the letter he had written to Richard, and which, he began to fear, might, by the sinister interpretation of the tyrant, be converted to his injury, if not to his destruction. While engaged in this train of thought, he was visited by the Bishop and his companions, who spared no argument to induce him to espouse the politics of Buckingham, and become an instrument for the establishment of Richmond upon the throne. For a long time, however, Rhys continued firm against all their solicitations, to which his only answer was, that, however criminal the conduct of Richard, he was still his lawful, or, at least, his actual sovereign, and to whom he was bound not only by the general allegiance of all subjects to their prince, but, in his case, by the solemn oath he had so recently taken. His spiritual adviser, after endeavouring in vain to overcome these scruples by a variety of exhortations, at length undertook to absolve him from his rash vow, if he should still feel conscientiously bound to adhere to it; and, with respect to that part of his letter to the king, in which he declared, that no disaffected person should enter the country without making a passage over his body, the zealous prelate suggested, that it would be no degradation, in such a case, for him to redeem his pledge by prostrating him-

particular period alluded to. The biographer of Rhys calls him John; but the only bishops of that name, about the time in question, were John Delabere, during the reign of Henry VI. and John Morgan, who succeeded to the see in 1503.

self before the new monarch, and thus allow him literally to march over his body to the throne, to which he was the undoubted and legitimate heir.

By such accommodating sophistry did Rhys's counsellors attempt to bring him over to their cause; but they still failed in immediately producing the desired result. Although their persuasions had obviously shaken his loyalty to Richard, he could not be induced all at once to abandon the imagined duty, which his oath had imposed upon him. However, after some farther deliberation, he conceived, that to espouse the cause of the Earl of Richmond would be most beneficial to the interests of his country, and resolved, accordingly, that his own private scruples should give way to the public good. He had scarcely arrived at this determination, before he received intelligence of the defeat and death of the Duke of Buckingham in his rash and ill-concerted enterprise near Gloucester. For a moment he seemed to regard this blow as fatal to the counsels he had embraced, but, having once taken a bold and decided part, he deemed it unbecoming his character to renounce it. So, notwithstanding that the same friends, who had before urged him to his present conduct, strove now, with a capricious inconstancy, to persuade him to the adoption of opposite measures*, he manfully rejected their temporizing counsels, and finally determined to adhere to those he had already espoused.

* Upon this occasion, although the greatest part of his friends advised him to remain faithful to Richard, there were not wanting others who endeavoured to prevail upon him to act a double part, and so preserve his life by the sacrifice of his honour. But such counsels he at once rejected. "'Tis true," his biographer tells us, "safety and honour were ever both of them the objects of Rhys ab Thomas's care, yet, seeing he was now to make trial for himself, he determined rather to jeopardise his safety than shipwreck his honour."

In the resolution he had thus taken he was soon confirmed, beyond the power of retreating, by letters, which arrived from the Earl of Richmond himself, soliciting his friendship and aid in the enterprise in which he was about to embark, and apprising him of his intention to land on the Welsh coast*. The communication was, as may be presumed, most cordially received; and, in the answer Rhys returned, he assured the prince of the alacrity, with which he embraced his cause, and of the vigorous preparations he was making to serve him. He also urged him to lose no time in carrying his plans into execution. The die was now cast, and Rhys directed his whole attention to the disciplining of his tenants and other dependants, and making the various military arrangements necessary to the occasion. These proceedings, it will be naturally imagined, did not escape the penetrating observation of Richard; but, as it does not appear that he made any remonstrance upon the subject, it is probable that he ascribed the activity of Rhys to a zeal in his own service, and to a desire to be prepared against the menaced invasion by Richmond. Nor is it at all unlikely, that Rhys himself gave a countenance to the king's delusion, the more effectually to promote the operations he had in view†. It is certain, at least,

* The letters, thus sent by the Earl of Richmond, were written by him at the instigation of his mother, who had sent over one Hugh Conway to Brittany for the purpose. The Countess, being apprised by Dr. Lewis of the indecision of Rhys, thought this would be the most effectual means of turning the scale in her favour. She accordingly, as the writer already quoted observes, "gave instructions for advising her son speedily to write unto the said Rhys, wishing him withal to season his compliments with large promises of honour." And it is probable, that the Earl did not omit this part of his task; nor are we justified in supposing, that Rhys was, on the other hand, inaccessible to the influence of such overtures.

† During the time that Rhys was taking the measures here alluded to for

that, when Henry landed, Rhys had prosecuted his schemes with so much dexterity and effect, that he found himself at the head of a well appointed force of more than two thousand horse, consisting of his own immediate dependants, together with a numerous train of followers, many of them individuals of rank and distinction from all parts of the Principality. The Welsh indeed hailed the arrival of Richmond on their shores with peculiar enthusiasm, from a notion that he was, in some respect, to be regarded as their countryman*. And it is hardly to be doubted, that Rhys ab Thomas availed himself of every opportunity to turn this popular feeling to the best account.

Henry VII., it is known, landed at Milford in Pembrokeshire on the seventh of August, 1485, when Rhys ab Thomas was among the foremost to welcome him. And, that he might not depart from the strict letter of his solemn assurance to Richard, he is reported to have fallen down before the new monarch, in order to allow him to march over his body†. Whether we be justified or not in giving credit to the account transmitted to us of this jesuitical conduct, it is certain that Rhys, on his first interview with

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the support of Richmond, Richard lay with his army at Nottingham, and seems to have placed implicit reliance on his Welsh subjects, especially Rhys ab Thomas and Sir Walter Herbert, son of the first Earl of Pembroke of that name, who, he observed, would soon defeat any attempt on the part of Henry. So incorrect was the king's information even on points thus essentially connected with the security of his throne.

* Henry VII. was the son of Edmund, Earl of Richmond, half brother of Henry VI., and son of Owen Tudor, a Welshman, by Catherine, widow of Henry V. Hence his popularity among the natives of Wales.

† Such is the statement of his biographer; but the tradition of the country is somewhat different. It is said, that he did not literally permit Henry to stride over his body, but that he went under the arch of a small bridge, over which the Earl's passage lay, and there remained until Henry had crossed it.

Henry, made him a public tender of his services, and those of his companions in arms, and exhorted him to afford them an immediate opportunity of proving by their actions the sincerity of their professions.

This opportunity, as the reader knows, was not long delayed. For, after the French troops that accompanied the Earl of Richmond, had been supplied with the arms and equipments, of which they stood so much in need, at the expense, for the most part, of Rhys ab Thomas*, the united force marched onwards towards Shrewsbury. The route assigned to Rhys was by Carmarthen; and persons were employed to precede him on his march, to apprise the country, through which he was to pass, of the part he had espoused. And so great was his popularity, that, upon his arrival at Brecon, his followers had increased to such a degree, that he was under the necessity of making a selection from the number, with which he again joined the Earl of Richmond. The reception he experienced from Henry was so much the more cordial, in consequence of some suspicions, that had been circulated during their separation respecting the sincerity of Rhys's intentions. It had been even rumoured, that, while thus appearing to support the interests of Richmond, he was in fact levying forces for the secret purpose of opposing his progress. His reappearance, therefore, in the ranks of the Earl, attended by a

* It appears from the report of Rhys's biographer, that the French troops, which came over with Richmond on this occasion, "wanted both necessary furniture of arms and other munition, besides that they were very raw and ignorant in shooting, handling of their weapons, and discharging the ordinary duty of soldiers;" and that Rhys "furnished them with all such things as he could spare, without the damage of his own particular, though in heart he wished them back again in France, there being not one man of quality among them to endear future ages to make mention either of his name or service."

considerable accession of troops, not only dispelled all the doubts the latter had entertained, but served to animate him with new hopes as to the event of his enterprise.

The battle of Bosworth, which decided the fate of Richard, and placed the crown on the head of his adversary, speedily followed these events*. In that engagement Rhys ab Thomas is recorded to have performed prodigies of heroism; and his biographer even ascribes to him the honour of having, by his own hand, terminated the career of the tyrant†. But, without intending to insist on the justice of his claim to such a distinction, it is certain, that he and his brave countrymen had a very material share in the triumph of that important day. Of this the honours, immediately afterwards conferred upon him by Henry, are a sufficient proof. He was not only knighted upon the field of battle, but received also the appointment of the King's Justiciary and Chief Governor in South Wales, with full power to reform the abuses then prevalent there. He was, in addition, made Constable and Lieutenant of Brecon, Chamberlain of the counties of Carmarthen and Cardigan, and Seneschal of the lordship of Buallt. These appointments, from a monarch so sparing of his favours as Henry, denote the high estimation in which the services of Rhys were regarded. As soon as he received them he departed for Wales, where he remained about two years, discharging his high office of Justiciary, as will be seen, with credit to himself, and particular benefit to his country.

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* It was fought on the 22nd of August, 1485, only a fortnight after Richmond's disembarkation.

† This is related by the biographer of Rhys, upon the credit of a Welsh tradition, which, however, wants the corroboration of less interested authority.

It has already been noticed that the state of society in Wales, at this period, was extremely disturbed. The wise regulations of Rhys, aided by the exertions of the Bishop of St. David's, had tended, indeed, in some degree, to mitigate the evil. But, although the general insubordination had been partially corrected, the cause still remained, and could only be eradicated by far more vigorous measures than any that had yet been adopted. During the absence of Rhys in the military services already noticed, circumstances had likewise occurred to excite the country into a new ferment. Rhys, upon departing with the Earl of Richmond, had entrusted his two younger brothers with a considerable armed force, both for the purpose of protecting his son, whose safety, he naturally presumed, might be compromised in the approaching contest, as well as for securing the public tranquillity. Scarcely, however, had he quitted his native soil, before the measure, he had thus prudently adopted, seemed to threaten consequences directly opposite to what were anticipated. The soldiers, thus freed from the controul of their former master, broke out into the wildest disorder, and materially aggravated the feuds, which they had been designed to suppress. The general mass of the people, too, no longer influenced by the presence of their natural lord, revived the jealousies and animosities, which had been recently suspended, and a state of civil anarchy was, as may be imagined, the necessary result.

Such was the unpromising aspect of affairs in South Wales, when Rhys returned loaded with honours and power to exercise the important functions with which the new king had invested him. It required, as will be admitted, all his influence and address to compose the storm, that had thus gathered in his absence; and it may be in-

ferred, from the very scanty notices which his biographer has supplied of his conduct on this occasion, that his usual prudence did not forsake him*. Acting as well from his natural disposition, as from his intimate knowledge of the character of his countrymen, he began by the adoption of the mildest and most conciliatory measures, proceeding afterwards to others of a more rigorous nature, and resorting, in extreme cases only, to the last severity of the law, nor even then without considerable repugnance†. By this course of justice, so seasonably tempered with mercy, he succeeded in allaying the feuds and dissensions, under which the country had so long suffered, and was rewarded with the general esteem for the public good he had thus been the means of accomplishing.

Rhys ab Thomas, now elevated to his equestrian dignity of Sir Rhys, had been thus beneficially engaged for nearly two years, when he was summoned from his honourable retreat by the political events that were then passing in England, in the insurrection of Lord Lovell and the Staffords, and the imposture of Simnel. The speedy suppression of the rebellion in the first instance, however, deprived him of any opportunity of signalizing himself, and he had only time to advance a part of the way towards the expected scene of action, at the head of five hundred horse, which he had hastily raised for the occasion. He had not long returned home before his services were again required, and

* It appears from several hints, thrown out by the writer of Rhys's Life, that he had an intention of writing also the history of his civil administration. It may be too late to ascertain, whether the intention was ever executed: most probably it was not, as such a work must, ere this, have been known, from its interesting connexion with the manners of Wales in the times to which it would have related.

† His biographer tells us that he always pronounced the sentence of death *voce magis leniter severâ quam rabidâ.*

we find him engaged in the battle of Stoke against Simnel*. Such was the suddenness of the summons he received upon this occasion, that he was obliged to go unattended. The king, in consequence, placed him at the head of a body of English horse, with which he appears to have distinguished himself in a remarkable manner, giving eminent proofs of his valour and prowess. He was wounded in this battle, and was otherwise in imminent peril, from which, according to his biographer, he was narrowly rescued by the timely assistance of the Earl of Shrewsbury†.

In no great while after this, Sir Rhys accompanied Henry in his abortive expedition against France, where it does not appear he had any opportunity of signalizing himself. We may collect, however, from Lord Bacon's accounts of the events of the campaign, that Sir Rhys and his followers were remarkable for their military appearance and discipline‡. Although Henry failed in his designs of

* This battle was fought on the 6th of June, 1487.

† It is said of Sir Rhys, in the memoir of him so often quoted, that "on this day only he fought for his life, elsewhere for his honour; either to give testimony of his bravery to his new companions, or upon a hurt received by an Irish dart from the hand of a common soldier, while he was in the heat of a single combat with the Earl of Kildare;" and that, "being somewhat transported with fury, and further carried than wisdom might give him commission, he fell from fighting with one to fight with many." And we learn moreover from the same authority, that, being inspired with new courage upon the appearance of the Earl of Shrewsbury, "he flew at his enemies, doing such slaughter amongst them, and performing such deeds of arms, as contributed much to that day's victory." It is added by the biographer, that Sir Rhys was rallied upon this occasion by the king, who asked him "whether was better eating leeks in Wales, or shamrocks among the Irish?" alluding to the number of the latter nation that were engaged, in the battle of Stoke, on the side of the rebels. To this Rhys answered, that "both were but coarse fare, yet either would seem a feast with such a companion," pointing to the Earl of Shrewsbury."

‡ Lord Bacon, after enumerating the several persons of distinction, that

territorial conquest, it is known that he succeeded in filling his coffers, by the contributions which he exacted from the inhabitants of Brittany; and, out of the treasure thus amassed, he made presents to some of his chief commanders. Sir Rhys among the number was not forgotten. The king offered him an annual pension of two hundred marks, which was however rejected, either owing to the supposed inadequacy of the reward, or from that love of independence, by which Sir Rhys seems ever to have been actuated*.

When the kingdom was disturbed by the rebellion consequent on the imposture of Perkin Warbeck, Sir Rhys, among other faithful subjects of the king, was again called into action. If his biographer be entitled to credit, he was engaged against the insurgents in the battle of Blackheath at the head of fifteen hundred horse†. And such, as re-

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accompanied the king on this expedition, says, "and amongst them was Richard Thomas" (manifestly a mistake for Rhys ab Thomas) "much noted for the brave troops that he brought out of Wales." *Life of Henry VII.* p. 108. See also *Harding's Chronicle*, p. 122.

* The historian of Sir Rhys's life relates, that, when the pension alluded to was offered, Sir Rhys "refused it with some indignation, telling the messenger, that, if his master intended to relieve his wants, he had sent him too little, if to corrupt his mind, or stagger his fidelity, his kingdom would not be enough." However well this may sound, it may be fairly assumed, that, whatever were Sir Rhys's sentiments on the occasion, he did not express them in such language. When Henry tendered him a token, however inadequate, of the sense in which he regarded his services, he never could have meant to "corrupt his mind," or undermine his loyalty. The fact is, that the biographer, in imitation of some ancient historians, has thought it occasionally necessary to put fine speeches into the mouth of the individual, whose exploits he is narrating—

——— "dabiturque licentia sumta pudenter."

† The battle of Blackheath was fought on the 22nd of June, 1497. The English historians, it is true, make no mention of Sir Rhys having been present; but, as many other persons of distinction must have passed unnoticed, this circumstance alone can be of no weight.

ported, was his fearless and intrepid conduct on the field, that he had two horses killed under him; but, mounting a third, he made a prisoner of Lord Audley, who was at the head of the rebel force. For this exploit, says the historian of his life, "the king gave him, by way of reward, the goods of the said lord, and, withal, for his more honour, created him banneret on the field, having then many wounds about him"*.

The public tranquillity that marked the remainder of Henry's reign, afforded Sir Rhys no farther military employment, and he appears, accordingly, during the whole period, to have confined himself to the discharge of his magisterial duties in South Wales. And such satisfaction had his administration given to the king, that, in 1506, he conferred on him the order of the garter†, together with the lordship of Narberth in Pembrokeshire‡. His biographer

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* This agrees with what Bacon relates of the conduct of the king after the battle of Blackheath. "And for matter of liberality," says the historian, "he did, by open edict, give the goods of all the prisoners unto those that had taken them, either to take them in kind, or compound for them as they could."—*Life of Henry VII.*, p. 171. The exploit, for which Sir Rhys ab Thomas was thus rewarded, is particularly mentioned in the petition of Rhys ab Gruffydd, his grandson, who was beheaded in the reign of Henry VIII., in enumerating the loyal services of his ancestors. There can therefore be little doubt of its authenticity, notwithstanding the silence of English writers respecting it.

† Fuller, in his "Worthies," in allusion to the honour bestowed on Sir Rhys on this occasion, says—"The thrifty king, according to his cheap course of remuneration, (rewarding church-men with church preferment and soldiers with honour) afterwards made him a knight of the order, and well might he give *him* a garter, by whose effectual help he had recovered a crown."

‡ This lordship had before been in the family of Sir Rhys. It belonged to his grandfather, the celebrated Gruffydd ab Nicholas, by whom it was conveyed to his youngest son, Owain ab Gruffydd, from whom it appears, by some unexplained means, to have passed to the crown. Upon the at-

even adds, that he received the offer of a peerage, which he refused upon the ground that the honour of knighthood was more congenial with the profession of arms, and that, if his descendants should be ambitious of any higher dignity, they might exert themselves to obtain it, as he had done for the acquisition of his*.

In the year following his accession to this new mark of his sovereign's favour, Sir Rhys instituted a public festival in South Wales, in commemoration of the anniversary of St. George, which was, at the same time, celebrated at court with great pomp. But, the duties of Sir Rhys's office not allowing him to attend, he adopted this method of doing honour to the occasion. The festival, which continued for five days, was conducted on the most munificent scale, embracing all the chivalrous exercises of the age, with a variety of public feasts and entertainments. Many individuals of rank and distinction from all parts of Wales, and especially such as had acquired any military celebrity, were present at the ceremony; and the general harmony that prevailed, afforded another proof of the high esteem in which Sir Rhys was held by his countrymen†.

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founder of Rhys ab Gruffydd, alluded to in the preceding note, this lordship, with other property, reverted, by forfeiture, to the crown, and never returned to the family of Sir Rhys ab Thomas.

* It has already been incidentally noticed, that this family has since been ennobled. The peerage was created in the year 1780, by the title of Baron Dinevor, of Dinevor Castle in the county of Carmarthen. The Right Hon. George Talbot Rice is the present inheritor of the honour. Rhys ab Gruffydd is related to have refused the Earldom of Essex, which refusal, as well as his assumption of the name of Fitzurien, formed one of Henry's charges against him.

† The account of these festivities is given by Sir Rhys's biographer at great length, and with considerable minuteness; and it is added, that the affair was so gratifying to the king, that "he gave Sir Rhys many thanks the year following, when he came to give his attendance at court." The

Upon the accession of Henry VIII. in 1509, Sir Rhys ab Thomas, at that time in his sixtieth year, was confirmed in the important and responsible situation he had filled under the late king. He appears, indeed, to have grown into favour with the new monarch in a manner so sudden and remarkable, that it is only to be explained by the respect in which he had been held by his father. Nor was it only in his civil capacity that Sir Rhys experienced the countenance of Henry VIII.: he accompanied him, at his special command, in his campaign in France, where he enjoyed several opportunities of displaying his personal prowess, especially in the battle of Therouenne, and at the siege of Tournay. And, notwithstanding the barren result of this expedition, both he and his son* were, on their return, honoured with new marks of the royal favour, by being appointed respectively Seneschal and Chancellor of the lordships of Haverfordwest and Rouse; which, with the offices already in the possession of Sir Rhys, constituted almost all the honours the crown had to bestow in that part of the kingdom.

The remainder of Sir Rhys's life appears to have been entirely devoted to the enjoyment of that *otium cum dignitate*, to which his long and meritorious services had so justly entitled him. He resided altogether at the Castle of Carew in Pembrokeshire, in the vicinity of the Bishop of St. David's, with whom he was on terms of the most intimate friendship†. His chief amusement during this

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tournament, held by Sir Rhys at Carew Castle on this occasion, is said to have been the only one ever celebrated in Wales.

* His son had been previously knighted—at least he is called Sir Gruffydd ab Rhys by the writer of his father's life.

† During the last four years of Sir Rhys's life the see of St. David's was filled by Dr. Richard Rawlins, who succeeded Bishop Vaughan.

period, even at his advanced age, was horsemanship, to which he had been, during his whole life, particularly attached; and, if in any part of his expenses he might be said to be at all profuse, it was in what related to his stables, which were always stocked with animals of the rarest breed and most approved quality*. Recreations of the nature alluded to, united with the general temperance and regularity of his living, and an habitual exercise of his religious duties, communicated to his latter days a degree of enviable serenity; and a gradual and almost imperceptible decay smoothed his passage to his last home. His death took place in the year 1527, in the seventy-sixth year of his age; and the chasm, which it made in society, was not to be easily filled. Full of years and of honours, he left behind him a reputation, which long continued the pride and delight of his country. His remains were deposited in St. Peter's Church in Carmarthen, where a stately monument was reared to his memory†.

Sir Rhys ab Thomas was twice married. His first wife has already been noticed: by her he had only one son, Sir Gruffydd ab Rhys, whose birth she did not long survive. Sir Gruffydd, who has before been mentioned in the course of this memoir, died in the lifetime of his father, leaving a son, who became the sole legal heir of his grandfather's large possessions‡. Sir Rhys took for his second wife

* "His numerous stalls," says his biographer, "were ever full of horses of the rarest breed, which he often had drawn out in martial array, as if the enemy were at hand, it being his maxim, that peace was the best season to provide for war; so that, when it came, it found him ready and prepared to meet it."

† This monument has been for more than a century in a state of decay, owing to the perishable quality of the stone employed in its erection; and no vestiges of the original inscription can now be discovered.

‡ This grandson is the person who has been already alluded to as

Janet Matthews, who was of an old and reputable family in Glamorganshire*; but there was no fruit of this union. However, although Sir Rhys's matrimonial alliances did not tend much to the increase of his family, his illegitimate issue was numerous; and it is to be recorded to his credit, that he made ample provision for all, and was at pains to marry his daughters into the most respectable families†.

After what has transpired in the preceding notices respecting the character of Sir Rhys ab Thomas, it becomes almost superfluous to enter here into any general summary of his more remarkable qualities. It has been seen, that he was distinguished by a remarkable proficiency in the accomplishments of the times, as well as by most of those virtues, which served to adorn the public situation it was his lot to fill. He was endowed at once with valour and prudence in an eminent degree; and the generosity of his disposition was sufficiently conspicuous in his conduct towards his de-

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having suffered decapitation in the reign of Henry VIII., four years only after the death of his grandfather, at the early age of twenty-three, upon a real or imaginary charge of High Treason. The indictment, with his answers thereto, may be seen in the *Cambrian Register*, vol. ii. p. 270.

* Such is the account given by the writer of his life, published in the *Cambrian Register;* but, among the few brief notices of him in *Collins's Peerage* (vol. vii. p. 506) it is stated, that he married, for his second wife, Elizabeth, sister to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. And this, it is added, appears from a monument in the chapel of St. Donat's, Glamorganshire, in memory of Thomas Stradling, Esq. son of Sir H. Stradling, Knight, who died at Cardiff, 1480, whose widow, the lady in question, became the wife of Sir Rhys ab Thomas, and was buried with him in Carmarthen.

† One was married to Lewis Sutton, Esq. of Haythog in Pembrokeshire, and another to Henry Wirriott, of Orielton, Esq. whose daughter and sole heiress married Sir Hugh Owen, of Bodowen in Anglesey, ancestor of the present Sir John Owen of Orielton. The sons too intermarried with some of the first families in South Wales, where their descendants still remain.

pendants and in his general hospitality. Nor ought the wisdom of his measures, while he was entrusted with the government of South Wales, to be overlooked: the successful issue of his exertions to reconcile and allay the jarring feuds of his countrymen, denotes no common union of talent and energy, while the popularity which he retained to the last, bears abundant testimony to the general mildness and equity of his administration. Of him, in a word, it might truly be said, in the language of the poet—

> And he was once the glory of his age,
> Disinterested, just, with every virtue
> Of civil life adorned—in arms excelling.

The voice of the contemporary muse of Wales is, as might be expected, loud in his praise; and the more sober testimony of tradition still lives to perpetuate his honourable reputation.

HUMPHREY LLWYD.

The memoirs of literary men, if we may credit the trite remark so often repeated, present but little to interest the great mass of mankind, who, being engaged in the more active business of life, can rarely extend their sympathies to the retired and unobtrusive pursuits of the scholar. The growing lucubrations of the closet, or the gradual developement of genius, supply, it is true, but few charms to those, whose ideas are never elevated above commercial or mechanical speculations; yet we should form but a mean estimate of our nature, by assigning to this portion of society the most important place in the scale of intellectual worth. There exists another and a higher class, whose enjoyments are of a more refined character, who can dwell with more delight upon the peaceful achievements of learning, than upon all the triumphs of the sword, and one of whose choicest pleasures it is to count the laurels that genius gathers along her noiseless but brilliant career.

The individual, whose life we have now to consider, may not indeed be entitled to rank among the most eminent in the great republic of letters; but this must be attributed rather to the peculiar nature of his pursuits, than to any deficiency in his intellectual claims. Literary greatness, like every other, is comparative; and he, who has selected the sequestered path, however profound his acquirements, however gifted his mind, must not expect to rival the popularity of those who have travelled, with equal pretensions, along the more public road.

Humphrey Llwyd was born about the year 1527, at Denbigh, in North Wales. His father, Robert Llwyd, was of

a younger branch of the family of that name, but originally called Rosindale, which resided at Foxhall, in the vicinity of Denbigh, to which place they came from the north of England. Paternally, then, the subject of this memoir was of English extraction; but through the marriage, as it would appear, of the first of his ancestors that settled in Wales, he claimed his descent also from Einion Evell, a person of note in North Wales during the twelfth century*.

Of Humphrey Llwyd's earliest years we have no account. From the first notice that has reached us we find him at the University of Oxford, where his name occurs in 1547 as a commoner of Brasenose College. Here he devoted his time chiefly to the study of medicine, which he designed for his profession, uniting with it the usual branches of academical learning. In 1551, he took his degree of Master of Arts; and there is reason for believing that he had previously been admitted into the family of Lord Arundel, at that time Chancellor of the University, as his private physician. In this capacity, according to a statement he has himself given us, he continued for fifteen years; and during the whole of this long period, he tells us, he was entirely estranged from the use of the Latin tongue, either in speaking or writing—a circumstance, which deserves to be noticed, whether we consider the taste of the age, or the station of the individual with whom he resided†.

* The first of the family that came to Wales appears to have been Foulk Rosindale, from whom Foxhall, or Foulk's Hall, was so called. He married into the family of the Lloyds of Aston, whence, in all probability, his descendants derived their name, as well as their extraction from Einion Evell.

† The passage in which H. Llwyd records this curious fact is as follows. It forms the commencement of his Letter to Ortelius, concerning the Antiquity of Anglesey. "Antequam ad plenum tuæ epistolæ responsum deveniam, hoc præfari libet; me, postquam bonas litteras vix a limine salutassem,

It was before his introduction to Lord Arundel, or very soon afterwards, that he composed his first work, which indicates, that astronomical, or, to speak more correctly, perhaps, astrological pursuits, had occupied a part of his attention at Oxford. The work alluded to is intitled "An Almanack and Calendar, containing the day, hour, and minute of the change of the moon for ever, and the sign that she is in for these three years, with the names and signs of the planets," and many other particulars explained in the preface. Although this is stated to have been his first production, the precise time of its appearance is unknown. His next work was a translation of the "Judgment of Urines," which was printed in London in 1551. The only other production of a miscellaneous character, which he gave the world, was a version of the "Treasure of Health," by Petrus Hispanus, to which he added the "Causes and Signs of every Disease," with the "Aphorisms of Hippocrates." All these were in English; and, although the date of the last composition is unknown*, it is to be presumed that it was written before he quitted the family of Lord Arundel.

It must have been during the period just alluded to that he became acquainted with Lord Lumley, whose sister he afterwards married. He collected for his lordship many curious works, which now form a part of the library in the British Museum.

Upon leaving Lord Arundel's family, probably about

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meipsum in familiam illustrissimi principis comitis Arundelii inseruisse, ibique hos quindecim annos continuos mansisse, ubi nec Latinè loquendi nec scribendi toto hoc tempore aliqua mihi concessa fuit opportunitas, unde contigit mihi Latini sermonis elegantiam servare non potuisse."

* It was first published in London, in 8vo, 1585, some years after the author's death.

the year 1563, he adopted the resolution of pursuing his profession at his native place, and accordingly retired to Denbigh. His residence there was within the walls of the castle; and at this time, there is every reason to suppose, his attention was first confined to the study of the history and antiquities of his native country, which an incident, to be noticed in the sequel, induced him afterwards more particularly to cultivate. Much of his leisure time, however, was dedicated to the charms of music, to which he appears to have been particularly attached; and it is therefore probable he had attained some proficiency in the art.

The rank he filled in society at this period, and the respect in which he was held by his fellow-townsmen, are to be collected from the fact of his having been chosen to represent the borough of Denbigh in Parliament. His duties as a senator necessarily occasioned him to reside much in London, which must also have been frequently his place of abode while living with Lord Arundel. In the capital, it is reasonable to presume, he contracted an intimacy with many individuals then eminent in the literary world. Among these was Ortelius, the celebrated geographer, who was at the time on his travels in England*. It was, most probably, his acquaintance with this person, from the congeniality of their literary pursuits, that communicated a new impulse to his cultivation of that branch of antiquarian learning in which he so much excelled. Ortelius was on the eve of publishing his "Ancient Geography," and Llwyd supplied him with maps of England and Wales for

* Abraham Ortelius was born at Antwerp in 1527, and was so celebrated for his geographical knowledge, as to have been designated by his cotemporaries, the Ptolemy of the age. His chief work is the "Theatrum Orbis," in folio, which procured for him the situation of geographer to Philip II. of Spain. He died in 1598.

its illustration, accompanied by manuscript copies of two of his Latin works on British antiquities, and which he dedicated to him, in return, as it would appear, for a "Description of Asia," which he had previously received from Ortelius*. The friendship that thus subsisted between them, though but of short duration, seems to have been particularly ardent, and was terminated only by the death of Llwyd, who, in one of his dedications alluded to, written but a short time before his dissolution, styles the individual to whom it is addressed, his "dearly beloved Ortelius."

Although it was only in his latter years that he directed his whole attention to the study and illustration of our national history, he had, while residing with Lord Arundel, written an English work on the subject, which has since been published under the title of "The Historie of Cambria," and which is, in a great measure, a translation of an old work in the Welsh language. A copy of this "Historie," under a different title, may be seen among the Cotton MSS. in the British Museum, and by which it appears, that it was written in the year 1559, about four years before the author had fixed his abode at Denbigh†. Of the two Latin productions above alluded to as being dedicated to Ortelius, the first in chronological order is a short treatise "De Monâ Druidum Insulâ antiquitate suæ restitutâ, et de Armentario Romano," and the other is entitled "Commen-

* This appears from his dedication to the Description of Britain.

† The Cotton MS., here alluded to, is marked "Caligula A. 6." and is entitled "Chronicon Walliæ à rege Cadwaladero usque ad A. D. 1294." This has been represented as a distinct production in some of the notices respecting H. Llwyd; but, upon a comparison of it with the printed work, there appears little or no variation, beyond what the editor of the latter has since supplied. It is subscribed "At London, 17th July, 1559—By Humffrey Lloyd," and may be the hand-writing of the author himself.

tarioli Descriptionis Britannicæ Fragmentum". They were both written in the year 1568, a short time previous to his decease. It is therefore probable, that the closing years of his life were wholly devoted to literary pursuits connected with the elucidation of our national history.

In the Epistle to his friend, prefixed to his Description of Britain, dated Denbigh, August 30th, 1568, he represents himself as in expectation of approaching death, in consequence of "a very perilous fever with a double tertian," which seized him on his journey from London to Wales. And he apologizes, on this account, for the imperfections of some other works he was about to send to Ortelius, and which, he says, "if God had spared his life," should be sent "in better order, and in all respects perfect*." The illness, to which he here alludes, he did not long survive, but breathed his last in the same year, at his native place, in the forty-first year of his age. His remains were interred in the parish church, "with a coarse monument, a dry epitaph, and a psalm tune under it," to borrow the words of a modern writer†.

Humphrey Llwyd had four children, two sons and two daughters. One of the former, named Henry, settled at Cheam in Surrey, and his great grandson, the Rev. Robert Lloyd, who was rector of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, made un unsuccessful effort to claim the Barony of Lumley,

* It does not appear to what works he here alludes. It is to be presumed, however, that they were some additional treatises connected with his native country, which he probably did not live to complete, and of which we have now to regret the loss.

† Mr. Yorke, in his "Royal Tribes of Wales." The following couplet will exemplify the "psalm tune," of which he speaks: it forms the commencement.

"The corps and earthly shape doth rest here, tomyd in your sight,
Of Humphrey Llwyd, Master of Arts, a famous worthy wight."

in right of the sister of Lord Lumley, who, as already mentioned, was married to the subject of this memoir. Whether any descendants of the family be now living, we have not been able to ascertain.

Of the character and habits of Humphrey Llwyd we have but few traces beyond what his works supply. Camden, who immediately followed him in the literary world, or was rather his cotemporary, describes him as standing pre-eminent in that branch of antiquarian research, to which he had devoted himself*. The writer of his life in the "Athenæ Oxonienses" represents him, besides, as a "person of great eloquence, an excellent rhetorician, and a sound philosopher." With these qualifications, of themselves sufficient for his fame, he united the fashionable accomplishments of the age, and was, in particular, as we have seen, well skilled in music, which often proved, during his latter years, the solace of those hours that were snatched from the labours of study, or the duties of his profession. It was, we may presume, the *dulce lenimen* of all his cares. In his person, if we may judge from a portrait of him still in existence, he was peculiarly gifted, while the manly beauty of his countenance indicated the corresponding intelligence of his mind†.

The several literary productions of Humphrey Llwyd have already been specified; but it may be proper to offer a few more remarks on those relating to Wales. Among this number the "History of Cambria" has been the most

* Camden describes him as "a learned Briton, and, for knowledge of antiquities, reputed by our countrymen to carry, after a sort with him, all the honour and credit."—See the chapter on the Ancient Inhabitants of Britain in his "Britannia." Camden was born in the year 1551, and must, therefore, have been seventeen when Llwyd died.

† The original portrait is at Aston: and a beautiful engraving of it may be seen in Mr. Yorke's "Royal Tribes."

generally read, and is, accordingly, the most popular. It is founded, as is well known, on the Welsh chronicle of Caradog of Llancarvon. It was left in an unfinished state by the author; but, a copy of it being in the possession of Sir Henry Sidney, Lord President of the Marches of Wales*, it was published at his solicitation in 1584, by Dr. David Powell, who supplied the deficiency, and enriched it besides with many valuable annotations. It is enough for the reputation of this work to say, that it has become the foundation of the various histories of Wales, that have since appeared.

The Fragment of the Description of Britain embraces a geographical and antiquarian view of the whole island, as well as a cursory account of its existing condition, according to its three divisions of England, Scotland, and Wales, and is remarkable for the boldness with which the author controverts some received authorities respecting the sites of several ancient fortresses and towns. This seems to have been a work of great research, not fewer than sixty-eight authors, native and foreign, being cited in the course of it. It was first printed at Cologne in 1572; and in the following year an English translation by Twyne, accompanied by several copies of commendatory verses†, was published

* He was the father of the celebrated Sir Philip Sidney, author of the "Arcadia."

† The compositions of this nature are four, one of which is by the Rev. Thomas Brown, Prebendary of Westminster, and another by the Rev. Edward Grant, Master of Westminster School. The following are extracted from some anonymous lines, and may be cited as a fair specimen of the whole:—

"Thy country, Llwyd, is bounden much to thee,
Thou makest it unto us not only known,
But unto such as in far countries be,
Whereby thy fame the greater way is flown,
And eke thy country's praise the more is grown;

under the title of the " Breviary of Britain". Moses Williams too, an able Welsh antiquary*, printed, in 1723, a handsome edition of the original work with annotations. The following specimen of the publication, extracted from Twyne's translation, may not be out of place here. It is a passage, in which the author describes the place of his birth, with reference to its state at the time he wrote. " This fine town", he says, " and my sweet country, being compassed well nigh about with very fair parks, and standing in the entrance of an exceeding pleasant valley, aboundeth plentifully with all things that are necessary to the use of man. The hills yield flesh and white meats. The most fertile valley very good corn and grass. The sweet rivers, with the sea at hand, minister all sorts of fish and fowl. Strange wines come thither forth of Spain, France, and Greece abundantly. And being the chief town of the shire, standing in the very middle of the country, it is a great market town, famous, and much frequented with wares and people from all parts of North Wales. The indwellers have the use of both tongues, and, being endued by Kings of England with many privileges and liberties, are ruled by their own laws"†.

The Epistle to Ortelius, concerning the Antiquity of the

So by one deed two noble things are chanced,
Britain and Llwyd to heaven are advanced."

With the exception of the extravagance of the last line, this passage supplies a just estimate of the fame Llwyd had acquired amongst his cotemporaries.

* Moses Williams lived in the beginning of the last century: besides this edition of H. Llwyd's works, he published an Index to the Welsh Poets, and was of considerable assistance to Dr. Wotton, in the publication of his " Leges Wallicæ." It is probable, that the translation, from the original Welsh, was furnished entirely by Moses Williams.

† " Breviary of Britain," p. 66-7.

Isle of Anglesey, was first published at Antwerp in 1570, afterwards by Richard, son of Sir John Price*, in 1573, and finally, by Moses Williams, with the work previously noticed. It is but a short treatise, and necessarily, from its limited subject, of less importance than the two preceding works relating to Wales; but it equally bears testimony to the talents and research of the writer. Both this and the Description of Wales, it may be proper to add, are written in chaste and elegant Latin, and prove that the author's long disuse of that tongue, while residing with Lord Arundel, had not impaired his academical attainments in this respect†.

Such are the few memorials, which the ravages of time have left us respecting the life and writings of Humphrey Llwyd. As long as the ancient history of the country, and especially of the Principality, continues to be an object of interest, his name will be respected by the patriot and the scholar. He will be esteemed, not merely for his talents and erudition, but as having been the first writer who extended, beyond the boundaries of his native land, an accurate knowledge of her history and antiquities‡.

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* Sir John Price, who was a native of Brecknockshire, was an eminent antiquary, and distinguished himself by his Vindication of British History against Polydore Virgil. He also assisted Leland in his "Assertio Arturii," and was the first to translate the creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue into the Welsh tongue. He died about the year 1553.

† He is described by Moses Williams, in the Preface to his edition, as being "in omni genere litterarum scientissimus, multæ lectionis, et in dicendo elegans, cujus paucos pares tulit illud quo vixit seculum."

‡ If we except the Vindication of British History, by Sir John Price, alluded to in a preceding note.

DR. JOHN DAVID RHYS.

Time has left but very few vestiges, to enable us to mark the existence of the subject of the following memoir. Yet, few as they are, it would be an act of injustice not to notice them in a work avowedly devoted to the commemoration of such natives of Wales, as have most distinguished themselves, whether by their virtues or talents, in promoting the interests of their country. And those readers who have formed an acquaintance with Welsh literature, or who know how to estimate the peculiar properties of the Welsh language, will be at no loss to appreciate the services of the individual, who is about to claim their attention.

John David Rhys, as he seems commonly to have styled himself*, was born, in the year 1534, at Llanvaethlu, in Anglesey. As nothing has descended to us respecting his parents, it may be presumed that their station in life was not very elevated. The rudiments of his education he probably received at his native place, and, when about the age of seventeen, we find him prosecuting his studies at Oxford. In 1555, when in his twenty-first year, he was elected student of Christ Church, and seems soon afterwards to have quitted the University.

About this period he left England, for the purpose of settling, for a time, in Italy, with the view, as it would appear, of perfecting himself in the study of medicine, in which, we may infer, he had been initiated while at Oxford. Sir Edward Stradling, a gentleman of distinguished rank

* He is occasionally called John Davies. His father's name was, probably, Davydd ab Rhys.

and connections in South Wales, with whom John David Rhys was on terms of peculiar intimacy, is related to have borne the expense of this journey, and which he may, therefore, have urged him to undertake*. However, it is certain that he became a member of the University of Sienna, in Tuscany, where, after pursuing his professional studies for some time, he took his degree of Doctor of Medicine.

But, whatever proficiency he may have acquired in the particular science just adverted to, he was by no means inattentive to others. An attachment to the study of languages seems especially to have influenced him; and he was considered to have arrived at as perfect knowledge of Italian as of his native tongue. He was, on this account, appointed Public Moderator of the school at Pistoia, in which capacity he gave universal satisfaction. During his stay in Italy, and probably during the time of his occupying the station of Public Moderator, he composed, in Italian, a Collection of "Rules for beginning the Latin tongue," which was subsequently published at Venice. He also wrote a treatise, in Latin, on the pronunciation of the Italian language, which was printed at Padua. Both these works were held in high estimation among the literati of Italy, and they bear unequivocal testimony to his masterly knowledge of the language of the country in which he was now a resident.

* Sir Edward Stradling was descended from William de Esterling, one of the twelve Norman Knights, who, as incidentally noticed in the life of Rhys ab Tewdwr, (p. 121, *supra*), settled in Glamorganshire after the death of that prince. He was the son of Sir Thomas Stradling, Knight, and himself received the honour of knighthood, in 1575. He was a great patron of men of learning, as well as a considerable collector of books and MSS. He was also deeply versed in the Welsh tongue, of which he is said to have written a Grammar. He died in the year 1609, at a very advanced age.

It cannot be precisely ascertained how long he remained in Italy, but there is ground for presuming, that many years had elapsed before he determined upon revisiting the land of his birth. He may have been at this time between forty and fifty*. Upon his return to this country he established himself at Brecon, as a practitioner of medicine, in which character he soon acquired a considerable reputation. His selection of Brecon as his place of abode was, in all likelihood, in compliance with the wish of Sir Edward Stradling, from whose seat that town is not very remote. And it appears, that much of his time was spent at St. Donat's Castle, in the society of his friend and patron, and in the enjoyment of the literary recreations natural to persons of their congenial habits.

In addition to the professional celebrity, which the subject of this memoir attained after his arrival in Wales, he had also acquired a character for general erudition, of the most varied and profound nature. Yet, as his attainments must have been far above the ordinary learning of the age, and especially in the limited circle in which he was destined to move, it is possible that he was regarded with the wonder of ignorance, rather than with the sober feeling of men capable of appreciating what they admired. It is, at least, certain, that the admiration of his superior endowments, was not unaccompanied by the envy and jealousies natural to weak minds; for in the dedication to Sir Edward Stradling, prefixed to his principal work, he complains, in the bitterest terms, of the gross injustice to which he had thus been exposed.

* This may be inferred from the Dedication prefixed to his Welsh Institutes, which he appears to have commenced in 1590, when about fifty years of age, and, as it seems, at no very long period after his return to his native country.

Yet, whatever annoyance he may, on this account, have experienced in his own immediate neighbourhood, there were not wanting some, and they individuals of learning and talent, who paid a full and sincere homage to his acquirements, and, above all, to his profound critical and philological erudition*. His masterly knowledge of Italian has already been noticed, and with that he united a thorough acquaintance with the classical languages, as well as with some others of modern Europe; but what peculiarly entitles him to a place in these pages is his acknowledged skill in the Welsh tongue, of which he has left an imperishable monument in his much celebrated Grammatical Institutes.

The origin of this work appears to have been simply as follows. Upon one occasion, when the author was enjoying the hospitality of St. Donat's Castle, Sir Edward Stradling shewed him a Latin poem in praise of that mansion, written by one Thomas Leyson, requesting at the same time, that he would render it into Welsh†. This Dr. Rhys did, and presented the translation, together with one, in the same language, of an Italian poetical epistle in praise of a country life, to his patron, who was so delighted with the excellence of the performance, in both instances, that he urged the writer to undertake a Latin treatise on the Welsh language, and especially with reference to its poetical character, for the instruction of foreigners.

Dr. Rhys lost no time in complying with this request, al-

* Among these were Camden and Sir John Stradling, as will appear by the sequel.

† Dr. Rhys, in his Dedication before mentioned, speaks of this composition as "venustum poema." Thomas Leyson was a native of Neath, in Glamorganshire, and settled as a physician at Bath, where he died. A brief account of his life may be seen in Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*.

though at the period, as he says, harassed by his private affairs and professional duties, as well as by being involved in several irritating contentions, through the calumnies, which, as already noticed, were continually assailing him. Yet, under all these difficulties and disadvantages, he proceeded with his undertaking, which he seems to have completed in 1592, when in his fifty-third year *.

From this period to the time of his death, an interval of sixteen or seventeen years, Dr. Rhys continued to reside at Brecon, or in the vicinity, dividing his time, as we may be allowed to conclude, between his literary pursuits and the avocations of his profession. It is presumed, that, during this period, he composed some other works in illustration of his native language; but none were ever published, and even the manuscripts have long ceased to exist, unless there be still at Jesus College, Oxford, a "Compendium of Aristotle's Metaphysics," in Welsh, ascribed to Dr. Rhys, and said to have been formerly there. Yet this may, at last, have been the production of those years which were spent at the University †. In the work in question the writer is related to have contended, as he might do successfully, for the capabilities of the Welsh tongue, as fully equal to the Greek in the expression of complex and philosophical terms.

Dr. Rhys breathed his last at Brecon, in 1609, in his seventy-fifth year, and, as it would appear, without ever having entered into the matrimonial state. He died in the communion of the Church of Rome; but it is not certain whether he was originally of this persuasion, or became a convert to it after his residence in Italy. It may, at least,

* The work was printed in London in the same year.

† The former existence of this MS. at Jesus College is stated in the life of Dr. Rhys, in the *Athenæ Oxonienses*.

be assumed, that he professed it during the greatest part of his life *.

It now remains to notice more particularly, than has yet been done, Dr. Rhys's principal work, upon which his literary reputation in connection with Wales must be grounded. The work is entitled, "Cambro-Brytannicæ Cymraecæve linguæ Institutiones et Rudimenta, accuratè, et, quantum fieri possit, succinctè et compendiosè conscripta, cum exactâ carmina Cymraeca condendi ratione, &c.†" Accompanying the work are the Dedication to Sir Edward Stradling, already noticed, a Latin Preface by Humphrey Prichard ‡, and one in Welsh by the author. The work, as the title imports, is rather a treatise on Welsh prosody, than a mere grammar, in the popular sense of the term. The first por-

* In the short account of Dr. Rhys, in the *Biographia Britannica*, it is asserted that he was not a Roman Catholic, in consequence of an expression used by Humphrey Prichard, in his Preface to the Grammatical Institutes, which expression will be noticed in the sequel. At present it is sufficient to add here, that, in the "Church History of England from 1500 to 1688," by Charles Dodd, published at Brussels in 1742, Dr. Rhys is numbered among English papists.

† In addition to the title, here given, there follows, after the word *conscripta*, "ad intelligenda Biblia Sacra nuper in Cambro-Brytannicum sermonem versa," an obvious interpolation of H. Prichard, to suit his hypothesis alluded to in the preceding note. But it should still be mentioned, that H. Prichard's assertion is merely conjectural: his words are "quantum conjecturâ assequi possum."

‡ Humphrey Prichard was a native of Bangor, in Carnarvonshire, and was educated at Oxford; but we have no particulars of his life, or of his connection with Dr. Rhys. His Preface evinces a considerable share of erudition, but it is difficult to account for the error he seems to have committed with respect to the particular object of the work, if we suppose his Preface to have been written with the privity of Dr. Rhys. It is not improbable that H. Prichard superintended the printing of the work in London, and inserted the Preface and the interpolation in the title-page, without the knowledge of Dr. Rhys.

tion of it, indeed, is devoted to the elementary characteristics of the language, and particularly to its orthography and the force of the Welsh letters; but considerably the greatest part is occupied in illustrating the singular and complicated rules of Welsh poetry *. In this respect these Institutes have the merit not merely of being the first production of the kind, but also of never having been since equalled †. It accordingly remains the only work, through which the learned of foreign countries can form any accurate estimate of the metrical properties of the Welsh language.

The incident, which gave birth to this production, has already been noticed, and will account for its more prominent features. Yet, notwithstanding this, Humphrey Prichard asserts, in his Preface, that the writer's chief aim was to facilitate the popular comprehension of the Scriptures, which had recently been translated into the Welsh tongue ‡.

* The Grammar embraces 304 pages, 41 of which are occupied in what may be called the orthographical properties of the language, 87 more in the more prominent grammatical characteristics, and the remaining 176 in Welsh prosody.

† The only Welsh Grammar, published before Dr. J. D. Rhys's work, was that of Gruffydd Roberts, printed at Milan in 1567. As this person was also a member of the University of Sienna, it is probable enough that he was on terms of friendship with Dr. Rhys, who, in his Dedication so often quoted, styles him a man of the greatest learning, and a professor of philosophy. The Grammar in question is chiefly confined to the orthography of the language. Since the appearance of Dr. Rhys's work, there have been published the following Welsh Grammars: 1. That by William Middleton (Gwilym Ganoldrev), published in 1603. 2. That by Dr. John Davies, in 1621. 3. That by John Gambold, in 1727. 4. That by John Rhyddderch, in the following year. 5. That by the Rev. Thomas Richards, in 1753. 6. That by W. Owen Pughe, Esq., prefixed to his Dictionary, published in 1803. Of all these the first and last only bear any comparison with Dr. Rhys's Institutes, in reference to their illustration of Welsh poetry. There were several Grammars in MS. before that of Gruffydd Roberts; but none of them have been printed.

‡ The Welsh translation of the Bible was published in 1588.

However this effect might have been incidentally produced, it is certain, from the circumstances already alluded to, that the author had no other end in view than to elucidate the peculiar qualities of Welsh versification. His religious propensities must have been wholly at variance with any wish to give a popular currency to the truths of Revelation.

The fame, that this work procured for the author during his lifetime, is sufficiently manifest, as well from the Preface of Humphrey Prichard, as from some encomiastic poetical effusions still extant. Among others, those of Camden* and Stradling†, nephew of Sir Edward before men-

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* Camden's lines are as follow:—

Imminuit damnosa dies decora alta Britannûm,
Linguæ splendorem restituitque dies.
Sed laus, docte David, tibi cedat, namque labore,
Quæ parta est patriæ gloria, parta tuo;
Nunc agedùm Hectoridas profer te Cambria dignes,
En nova lux linguæ, Mæonidesque novus.

† Two Epigrams by Stradling are prefixed to the work. The following may be cited as the most favourable:—

Antè Britannorum nomen, vis bellica, virtus,
Ingenium mores, orbis erant speculum:
Lingua diu latuit neglecta, sed error in illo
Extitit, ignotæ nulla cupido fuit.
Hanc modò tu Græcis, David, literisque Latinis
Æquasti, gentis gloria primæ tuæ.

In a volume of Epigrams by the same writer, published in 1607, the following also occurs, which proves that Dr. Rhys was at that time living.

Rhæse mihi charos venerabilis inter amicos,
Canities fidâ sed probitate magis.
Mona cui natale solum, Britannia stirpem,
Italia ingenium, Sena dedit gradum.
Hanc tibi Stradlingus chartam pro munere mittit,
Dona, senex, juvenis qualiacunque cape,
Europâ quamvis peregratâ, Rhæse, noteris,
Forsan et hac chartâ notior esse potes.

Sed

tioned, which are prefixed to the work, deserve to be noticed. But the reputation of Dr. Rhys was not doomed to rest only upon the unstable basis of cotemporary admiration. His merits as a critic in the Welsh language, and as an illustrator of its poetical attributes, have been confirmed by the suffrages of more than two centuries; and his name is still venerated as that of an individual, who has conferred the most essential benefits on Welsh literature. Nor, until the Awen of Cymru shall cease to influence the hearts of his countrymen, will these benefits be forgotten.

Sed pereant chartæ, expurgatur quicquid in illis;
Ipse tibi, mihi tu pectore charus eris.

Stradling was much esteemed by his cotemporaries for his learning and genius. He succeeded to the estates of his uncle, Sir Edward, in 1609, and was created baronet in 1611.

BISHOP MORGAN.

THERE has already been an opportunity for remarking, in the progress of this work, that the chronological order, in which it is written, must occasionally produce an uniformity in the character of succeeding lives, which would not have occurred under a different arrangement. In the former instance we had a succession of warriors, who might justly be regarded as the most distinguished individuals of the age, in which they flourished, with reference to the national object of these memoirs. The reader will now have to contemplate a long unbroken line of literary characters, who, in the more tranquil portion of the Welsh annals, and when the country was no longer agitated by foreign wars or civil commotions, became its most conspicuous ornaments. The days were long past when the sword of the patriot could assert the freedom and independence of his native soil; and it only remained for him to vindicate, with his pen, the learning and the genius of Wales.

It is not merely, however, as a literary character that the subject of the present memoir has a claim on our respect. He stands also distinguished as an eminent divine, and as having contributed, in a signal manner, to the spiritual welfare of his countrymen, by giving to the world the first complete version of the Scriptures in the Welsh tongue; and it is to be regretted that but little is known of this exemplary individual.

William Morgan was the son of John Morgan, of Gwibernant, in Penmachno, in the county of Carnarvon; but the time of his birth cannot be accurately ascertained. Paternally he claimed descent, according to some accounts,

from Nevydd Hardd, and, by others, from Hedd Molwynog, heads of two of the Fifteen Tribes of North Wales; and by his mother's side he was connected with another of these privileged clans, of which Marchudd ab Cynan was the founder*. It is but a natural inference then to conclude, that his parents filled a respectable station and ranked among the Welsh gentry of that period.

His education, of the early portion of which we are not informed, was completed at St. John's College, Cambridge. Nor have any memorials descended to us of the proficiency he made in his academical studies, or of the particular nature of his occupation for some years after quitting the University. The first notice, that occurs respecting him, is, that he was instituted to the vicarage of Welshpool, in Montgomeryshire, on the 8th of August, 1575, which, we may presume, was his first preferment in the church; and, although we have no particulars of his life previous to this period, it is extremely probable, that much of it, however unprofitable to himself in a worldly sense, was not unproductive of benefits both to himself and others, of a more important character. It was employed, we may conclude, in laying the foundation of that work, the Welsh translation of the Bible, which will transmit his name with honour to the latest posterity.

From the vicarage of Welshpool, after a residence there of three years, he was removed to the living of Llanrhaidr

* The Fifteen Tribes have for their founders so many chieftains or nobles of North Wales, who lived, for the most part, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Most of the principal families in that part of the Principality continue to trace their connection with these tribes. It is possible, that they had their origin in the system of clanship, which anciently prevailed in Wales. There are also Five Royal Tribes, which relate to both divisions of the Principality.

Mochnant, in Denbighshire, where he completed his valuable work. His original intention was to translate no more than the Pentateuch; but, having occasion in 1583, in consequence of a dispute with his parishioners, to see Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, he was persuaded by that prelate to proceed in his undertaking, and a complete version was the result*. About the year 1587 he went to London for the purpose of committing his work to the press; and, for the year during which he was engaged in superintending the printing, he resided with Dr. Gabriel Goodman, Dean of Westminster, of whose hospitality as well as of his general kindness on this occasion he speaks in terms of the liveliest gratitude†. In 1588 the Welsh Bible was published, accompanied by a dedication to Queen Elizabeth; and in the same year Morgan exchanged the living of Llanrhaidr for the more profitable rectory of Llanvyllin, with which he received also the sinecure of Pennant in the vicinity. Whether his recent services in the cause of the church were the immediate occasion of this promotion, must be left to conjecture; but it is certain, that they were soon to receive a more worthy acknowledgment.

In 1594 the living of Denbigh was added to his other preferments, and in the following year he was raised to the mitre by the express desire of Queen Elizabeth. Thus did the zeal and learning he had evinced in his great work at length meet with an appropriate reward. His first episcopal preferment was the see of Llandav, which he retained until 1601, when he was translated to the more valuable bishopric of St. Asaph.

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* This we learn from the Dedication, prefixed to the work, in which he says he also experienced the most liberal assistance and advice from the archbishop with reference to the undertaking.

† See his Dedication before noticed.

From a correspondence between Bishop Morgan and Sir John Wynn of Gwydir, still extant*, it would appear that the latter was, in some respect, instrumental in procuring the bishop's promotion. Upon one occasion Sir John Wynn observes, in a letter to Morgan, that, "if he had not pointed the way with his finger," Morgan might have remained Vicar of Llanrhaidr; and, in another instance, in a communication to a mutual friend he has the following more explicit remark in the same point,—"Was it not I that first dealt with Mr. Boyer to make him bishop, and make the bargain? Mr. Boyer was neither known to him, nor he to Mr. Boyer; *ergo*, if that had not been, he had continued still Vicar of Llanrhaidr." He also makes an obscure allusion, in the same letter, to something having "been objected against Morgan and his wife," which would have prevented his translation to St. Asaph, but for the good offices of Sir John Wynn and his friends. In answer to these insinuations, the bishop denies that the favours he received from Sir John Wynn were, by any means, so great as the latter accounted them, and, with respect to the interference of that gentleman in procuring his election to St. Asaph, he says, in his letter to the mutual acquaintance before alluded to,—"how much he is deceived herein you and others know." Yet, as he does admit that he was indebted to Sir John Wynn for some acts of kindness, there may be a partial foundation for the assertions of the latter,

* This correspondence may be seen in the Appendix to Mr. Yorke's "Royal Tribes." It had its origin in the refusal on the part of the bishop to comply with a request made by Sir John Wynn, which will be more particularly noticed in the sequel. The letters are dated in 1603, about two years after the bishop's removal to St. Asaph. Sir John Wynn, who was created a baronet in 1615, wrote a small work called "A History of the Gwydir Family," which contains some curious anecdotes illustrative of the manners of that time. He died in 1626, at the age of seventy-three.

though to assume that he was entirely, or even principally, the means of raising Dr. Morgan to his episcopal dignity, is to suppose (contrary to what has been the common belief on the subject) that Queen Elizabeth or her advisers wanted, of themselves, the discernment to appreciate his merit, or the virtue to reward it.

The correspondence, to which allusion has here been made, deserves notice also as evincing, on the part of Dr. Morgan, a pertinacious conscientiousness in the exercise of his episcopal functions, which is somewhat remarkable. Sir John Wynn, it seems, presuming upon the kind offices that he had rendered to the bishop, made application to him to confirm the lease of a rectory*: the bishop returns to this an immediate and positive refusal upon the plea of conscience, "which" (he says in his letter to Sir John Wynn) "assureth me that your request is such, that, in granting it, I should prove myself an unhonest, unconscionable, and irreligious man,—you a sacrilegious robber of my church, a perfidious spoiler of my diocese, and an unnatural hinderer of preachers and good scholars, the consideration of which would be a continual terror and torment to my conscience." Sir John Wynn, who seems not to have been at all prepared for such a result, upon receiving this decisive reply, makes a bitter complaint of the bishop's ingratitude, recapitulating, in two letters, numerous little services he had rendered him, and concluding by desiring Dr. Morgan to "be assured of him as bitter an enemy (if he drive him to it) as ever he was a stedfast friend." There may be something unchristian in this menace; but it may be doubted, on the other hand, whether the occasion warranted, on the part of the bishop, so strict a discharge of his pastoral duties. If, however, his determined refusal to

* This was the rectory of Llanrwst.

oblige a friend and a benefactor in a matter of no great moment was really dictated, as he alleges, by a conscientious regard for the welfare of his diocese, it may easily be conceived to what a rigid extreme he must have carried this spirit upon ordinary occasions.

He held the see of St. Asaph only three years, as he died on the 10th of September, 1604, and was interred on the following day in the cathedral, without any monumental memorial to mark the place of his sepulture.

It may now be proper to offer some fuller account of Bishop Morgan's translation, than what has been incidentally given in the course of this memoir. Before the appearance of this work very few efforts had been made to familiarize the natives of Wales with the sacred volume, through the medium of their vernacular tongue. The first publication of this nature was a translation of the portions of Scripture, appropriated to the communion service, which was printed in 1551, under the signature of W. S., the initials of William Salisbury, who afterwards, in 1567, with the assistance of Dr. Richard Davies*, Bishop of St. David's, and the Rev. Thomas Huet†, published an entire version of the New Testament‡. Long before either of

* Dr. Richard Davies, a native of Denbighshire, was Bishop of St. Asaph, in 1559, and was translated to St. David's in 1561. In addition to the assistance he gave W. Salisbury, he was employed in the English version of the Bible, and translated all from the beginning of Joshua to the end of Samuel. He is also stated to have assisted Morgan in his version of the Old Testament; but this appears to be without any foundation, as he died in 1581, two years before Morgan appears to have determined upon translating the whole of the sacred volume.

† He was Precentor of St. David's.

‡ William Salisbury was by profession a lawyer. Besides the work abovementioned, he published also a treatise on Rhetoric in Welsh, and a small Welsh Vocabulary.

these publications, indeed, an attempt appears to have been made to translate the Old Testament; for Bishop Davies, in the work last noticed, mentions that he had in his youth seen a MS. Welsh translation of the Pentateuch in the possession of a near relative of his family. This, however, was never printed, nor is there any other record of its existence, than what is afforded by this casual allusion*.

Notwithstanding so little had been done towards promulgating a knowledge of the Scriptures in Wales before Bishop Morgan's undertaking, the necessity of the measure had occupied the attention of the legislature a long time antecedently. In the year 1563, the fifth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, an act passed, directing that a Welsh version of the Old and New Testament should, under the superintendence of the four Welsh bishops and the Bishop of Hereford, be prepared for general use in the Welsh churches on the 1st of March, 1566; and, in the event of a noncompliance with this enactment, a penalty of forty pounds was to be inflicted on each prelate. Whether any effort was made to enforce the provisions of this act we are not informed: it is probable, that the views of the legislature were not adequately supported by the co-operation of individuals in power, and it is certain, that the penalties, im-

* Dr. Llewelyn, in his "Historical Account of the Welsh Versions of the Bible," suggests that the translation, thus alluded to by Bishop Davies, might have been the work of Tindall, who was a native of Wales. But he has obviously no authority for the surmise. It is not improbable, that partial versions of the Scriptures may have existed in Wales at a remote age, particularly during the frequent intercourse that took place with Armorica in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, when many missionaries came over from that country to Wales, and established numerous colleges and churches for the propagation of Christianity. However, if any such versions existed, we have no longer any vestiges of them.

posed on the bishops, were by no means sufficient to intimidate them into any extraordinary exertions.

From whatever cause it happened, twenty-five years had elapsed from the date of the statute alluded to before its object was, without its assistance, accomplished. What a decree of the legislature had failed in effecting was, at length, achieved by the voluntary and disinterested labours of a private individual. In his original conception of this great design, it is likely that Morgan had little hope of emolument or honour: he was satisfied, we may presume, with the reward of his conscience in a case so pregnant with that peculiar species of consolation. His accidental interview with Whitgift, and his acquaintance with Dean Goodman*, opened a new field to his enterprise, as well as a brighter prospect of final success. He had also, in the progress of his pious undertaking, secured the friendship of the Bishops of St. Asaph and Bangor, to whom he expresses his obligation for their liberal exertions in his behalf†. Thus in possession of patrons, he was also provided with able assistants. Dr. Richard Vaughan‡, Dr. David Powell,

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*. Dr. Gabriel Goodman was a native of Ruthin in Denbighshire, where he founded a school and a hospital. He supported Camden in his travels, and procured him the appointment of Under Master in Westminster School. He was forty years Dean of Westminster. He is said to have been the author of the English translation of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, as we now have it; but it does not appear that he afforded Morgan any material assistance in his Welsh version, beyond the supply of books, in which he was extremely liberal. Dr. Goodman died in 1601.

† Drs. Hughes and Bellot were, at this period, Bishops of St. Asaph and Bangor.

‡ Dr. Richard Vaughan was a native of Carnarvonshire, and educated at St. John's College, Cambridge. He was successively Bishop of Bangor, Chester, and London. His merit as a scholar was very great. Owen, the Epigrammatist, has the following couplet upon him:—

the historian*, and Dr. Edmund Prys, Archdeacon of Merioneth†, are named as having been his coadjutors in the translation. The parts, however, which fell to their share, although they cannot be precisely identified, are admitted to have been very inconsiderable in comparison with the labours of Morgan himself. This remark, it should be added, has reference solely to the version of the Old Testament; for that of the New Testament was adopted, with some variation, from the preceding translation by Salisbury.

Such are briefly the circumstances connected with the first Welsh version of the bible, from which it may be inferred, that Bishop Morgan was the sole projector of the work, and that he brought it to a conclusion without any very material literary assistance. In the edition of 1620, by Bishop Parry, several alterations were introduced, but not of sufficient importance to deprive the original translator of the chief merit belonging to the accomplishment of this great national undertaking.

The Welsh bible has always been regarded, even in a mere literary view, as the most valuable work in the language; and, in the extravagance of critical eulogy, it has been described as uniting the varied beauties, of which

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Præsul es (O Britonum decus immortale tuorum!)
In Londinensi primus in urbe Brito.

* Dr. Powell was a native of Denbighshire, and educated at Oxford. He was vicar of Rhiwabon in 1571, and enjoyed afterwards other preferments in Wales. He died in 1598. Besides the assistance he gave to Morgan, he published the "Historie of Cambria" in 1584, as has already been noticed in the life of Humphrey Llwyd.

† Dr. Edmund Prys was an eminent Welsh poet as well as a profound scholar. He was a native of Merionethshire, and received his education at Cambridge. Besides the part he had in the translation of the Bible, he also wrote a Welsh metrical version of the Psalms, which is still in use. Several of his Welsh poetical pieces are also preserved.

the Welsh tongue is susceptible, with all the native simplicity and other characteristics of the Hebrew*. That it approaches more closely than the English version to the peculiar genius and sublimity of the original, from the nearer affinity of the two languages, will be admitted by all competent judges; but that it is to be considered as a perfect specimen of the purity, copiousness, and expressiveness of the Welsh tongue, will be maintained only by those who suffer their judgment to be influenced by the sacredness of the subject, rather than by any other consideration. The Welsh translation, it is true, comprises numerous beauties even as a literary performance; but, like every other work of man, it is, at the same time, chargeable with many errors and inaccuracies, which are to be ascribed to several causes, independent of the length of the work, to which some inadvertencies were unavoidably incident,—for

—— opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum.

Among the causes alluded to may be here mentioned, an ignorance of those peculiar capabilities of the Welsh language, which have since been so ably developed,—too servile a conformity with the popular style of expression in use at the time, arising, no doubt, from an anxious and laudable aim at perspicuity,—and finally, perhaps, an unnecessary deference to the authority of the English translation. Hence those inaccuracies of orthography—those verbal contractions and elisions, of mere vulgar currency, and wholly irreconcileable with the classical purity of the language—that unnecessary introduction of weak auxiliaries and other

* It is unnecessary to particularize the works to which allusion is here made. Among others, Walters's Dissertation on the Welsh language may be mentioned.

expletives*,—that occasional inattention to the various inflections of verbs,—and that adoption of less felicitous terms of expression than the language would have supplied, which the most enthusiastic admirers of the Welsh version must admit are to be found in it. Whatever errors of a more important character it may possess are to be traced to the comparatively imperfect state of biblical criticism at the period of its production. But, after all, with the full admission of all these imperfections, which are opposed rather to the inconsiderate praises of enthusiasts than to the genuine reputation of the work, the Welsh version must be regarded as among the noblest attempts to familiarize modern nations with the truths of divine writ, and as an imperishable monument of the zeal, learning, and industry of its author.

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* The faults thus far alluded to may be considered as having been, in some degree, recognised by authority. For in 1807 a small stereotype edition of the Welsh Bible was published at Cambridge, under the superintendance of an eminent Welsh scholar, who had permission to correct the more obvious blemishes of the nature above described; and an edition is now in the press at Oxford, which a gentleman of that University, well qualified for the task, is, as we understand, to correct in a similar manner, upon the plan of the Cambridge edition.

DR. JOHN DAVIES.

Among the benefactors of Welsh literature the individual, whose name is here prefixed, holds a distinguished rank. And it is to be regretted, as in some preceding instances, that but few notices respecting his life have descended to our times.

According to the accounts generally received, Dr. John Davies was a native of Llanverres, in Denbighshire, where he first saw the light, it is probable, about the year 1570. His father worked at the humble occupation of a weaver; but his family appears to have been respectably connected*. The subject of this memoir received his early education at Ruthin school, which had been founded some years previously by Dr. Gabriel Goodman. His tutor here was Dr. Richard Parry, afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, and editor of the Welsh translation of the Bible, published in 1620; and the relation of master and pupil, that was thus formed between these two individuals, was subsequently matured by adventitious circumstances into a friendship, which continued during their joint lives.

In the year 1589 Dr. Davies entered upon an academical

* Mr. Yorke, in his "Royal Tribes," says he was of the tribe of Marchudd ab Cynan; and it appears, from a short biographical notice of him in the *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 158, that he was maternally descended from Ednyved Vychan, a celebrated Welsh chieftain in the beginning of the thirteenth century. Dr. Davies himself, too, in one of his letters dated August 26, 1623, alludes to Mr. Vaughan of Hengwrt, the celebrated antiquary, as his "cousin." See the *Cambrian Register*, vol. ii. p. 470. His father appears to have been a native of Denbighshire, and was known by the name of David ab John.

life, and became a member of Jesus College, Oxford. His first residence in the university did not exceed four years, during which he took a degree in arts, and acquired a reputation for a considerable share of academical learning. In 1593 he quitted Oxford, and retired to Wales, where he prosecuted his study of divinity, and added to it that of the language and antiquities of his native country*. In the year following his departure from Oxford, he entered into holy orders, but remained without any preferment ten years, an interval which he, no doubt, employed most beneficially in the particular branches of learning to which he had devoted himself. In 1604, a short time antecedent to Bishop Parry's election to St. Asaph, he was presented by the crown with the rectory of Mallwyd, in Merionethshire, and became soon afterwards Chaplain to his friend on his elevation to his episcopal dignity.

After a residence of about fifteen years in the country, he returned to Oxford in 1608, and was admitted of Lincoln College, as Reader of Bishop Lombard's Sentences†, having first obtained a dispensation for not ruling in arts. The duration of his second residence at the university cannot be accurately ascertained; but it is probable it was not

* His attachment to the cultivation of his native language must have commenced as early, at least, as this period; for in the preface to his Grammar, published in 1621, he says that he had devoted the leisure of more than thirty years of his life to this pursuit.

† The "Books of Sentences," four in number, were the work of Peter Lombard, Bishop of Paris, in 1172, forming a compilation of extracts from the writings of the Christian Fathers, whose inconsistencies and contradictions the worthy prelate, with true Catholic zeal, endeavours to reconcile. This work, according to Roger Bacon, was in such repute soon after its appearance, that even the Holy Scriptures themselves were deemed of inferior importance. Such was the tyranny, which, in that unenlightened age, scholastic theology exercised over the minds of men.

long, as we find him, in 1612, elected a Canon of St. Asaph, and, in 1613 and 1615, presented with the living of Llan-y-Mawddwy, in Merionethshire, and the sinecure of Dar Owain, in Montgomeryshire, which, with the preferment he already enjoyed, must have placed him in affluent circumstances.

In 1616 he took his degree of Doctor of Divinity, and was, in the following year, appointed to the Prebend of Llan Nevydd, in the diocese of St. Asaph, which was his last promotion in the church. In a few years afterwards he lost his friend and benefactor, Bishop Parry*, and, with him, whatever benefit might still have resulted to him from their long intimacy, during which the knowledge, which that prelate must have acquired of his friend's talents and character, may have disposed him, in a peculiar manner, to reward the merit which he had so many opportunities of appreciating.

What may have strengthened the tie between these two persons, in addition to their early connexion, was their joint employment in the revision of Bishop Morgan's Welsh Bible. It is probable, that Dr. Davies was thus engaged soon after his first retirement from Oxford; and his anxiety to qualify himself for so important a task may have induced him to devote himself at that period, in a particular manner, to the cultivation of his native tongue, as well as to the study of Biblical literature. Bishop Parry's translation was published, as already incidentally intimated, in 1620; and it appears from a marginal note on Dr. Davies's Welsh

* Bishop Parry was a native of Ruthin, in Denbighshire, and received his education, first, under Camden at Westminster, and afterwards at Christ Church, Oxford. He was Chancellor of Bangor, Vicar of Gresford, Dean of Bangor, and ultimately Bishop of St. Asaph, where he died in 1623. He was highly reputed for his learning and piety.

Dictionary, that the service he rendered on the occasion was very considerable*.

The first work, in elucidation of the Welsh language, which Dr. Davies gave the world, was his Grammar, published in 1621, under the title of "Antiquæ Linguæ Britannicæ Rudimenta," with a dedication to Bishop Parry, and a preface addressed to the venerable Dr. Edmund Prys†. This Grammar is strictly what it pretends to be, a treatise on the rudimental characteristics of the Welsh tongue; but it has supplied essential aid to subsequent writers in the same branch of literature. It is written in Latin, and in a style which proves the author to have been perfectly master of that language.

In 1632 Dr. Davies published his Dictionary, upon which his literary fame, and especially as an expounder of his native language, must chiefly rest. About forty years

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* This note is by a Chancellor of St. Asaph, and occurs in an edition of Davies's Dictionary published a few years after the death of the author.—The words are "In Bibliorum ultimâ et emendatâ editione Jo. Dav. perutilem impendit operam." In addition to the aid he thus rendered to Bishop Parry, it is also said, that he had previously assisted Bishop Morgan. This is mentioned in the *Athenæ Oxonienses*, and in other works which have followed it, and the statement seems to receive some countenance from an expression of Dr. Davies himself in the preface to his Grammar, in which he says—"Utrique S. S. Bibliorum interpreti Brit. indignus fui administer." But, as he was at school in the year (1588), in which Morgan's translation was published, it is not probable that he could have afforded any material cooperation, and especially as, according to his admission, it was not until about this period that he began to devote himself seriously to the cultivation of the Welsh tongue. If, then, he was of any assistance to Bishop Morgan, it was merely, we may presume, by making some literal emendations: he could not, at that time, have arrived at any critical proficiency in the language.

† A short notice concerning him occurs in the preceding life. He was, at this period, more than eighty years of age.

previously, as appears from a letter of his still extant, he had laid the foundation of this work*; and in 1626, at the request of Sir John Wynn, of Gwydir, he undertook the revisal of a work in manuscript, of a similar nature, by Thomas ab William, commonly called Sir Thomas Williams, a distinguished Welsh scholar†. In 1627 he had brought his labours to a close, both by completing his own production, and by introducing into that submitted to his revision such alterations as he deemed proper: and five years afterwards both works were united in one publication, under the title of "Antiquæ Linguæ Britannicæ et Linguæ Latinæ Dictionarium Duplex," the Welsh-Latin portion being entirely his own, and the Latin-Welsh comprising the corrected labours of Thomas ab William. The Dictionary is dedicated to Charles II., at that time Prince of Wales; but it

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* The letter here alluded to is one to Mr. Owen Wynn, of Gwydir, a son of Sir John Wynn, dated January 23, 1627, and in which he says that he began his own Dictionary in 1593, the year in which he quitted Oxford, but that he was only, at the time he wrote, beginning to "write it fair," an operation which he expresses a hope of concluding "by the beginning of summer;" but four subsequent summers at least had elapsed before the work saw the light. See the *Cambrian Register*, vol. ii. p. 473. It is strange that Mr. Lewis Morris, in one of his letters to Mr. Pegge (*Cam. Reg.* vol. i. p. 370), should have styled Davies's Dictionary "a hasty work," when it is evident, that nearly forty years had intervened between the first conception of the work and its publication.

† This fact is stated in the letter to Mr. Owen Wynn, above quoted. He began the revision in the month of April, 1626, and completed it in the following January. Thomas ab William was a native of Carnarvonshire, and by profession a physician. He resided at Trevriw, near Llanrwst. Besides the Dictionary above alluded to, he wrote a compilation of Welsh pedigrees, a collection of medical receipts, and a herbal in Welsh, English, and Latin, which exist in manuscript. According to some accounts of him, he was a divine as well as a professor of physic. His death happened about 1620.

does not appear that the author ever derived any benefit from this tribute to royalty*.

It is hardly necessary to enter into an examination of the acknowledged merits of a work, which, for nearly two centuries, continued the most valuable of the kind in the Welsh tongue. More extensive researches, indeed, have, of late years, added many thousand words to those collected by Dr. Davies†, gleaned, probably, from sources to which he had not access, especially the works of the more ancient Welsh poets, which have been brought to light by the patriotic exertions of modern times‡. But, notwith-

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* A quarto edition of this Dictionary was published in Holland, in the last century, by Boxhornius, with the view of promoting inquiries into Celtic antiquities.

† This remark has reference to the truly valuable Dictionary, by W. Owen Pughe, Esq. published in 1803, which, in its lucid arrangement of the language, as to its elementary and derivative properties, has no rival in this or any other tongue. It comprises about eighty thousand words more than any preceding Dictionary, and a great proportion of these authenticated by quotations from the best Welsh writers in prose and verse. Besides Dr. Davies's work and the one just noticed, the only others of any note are the *Archæologia Britannica*, by Edward Llwyd, the Welsh-English Dictionary, by the Rev. Thomas Richards, and Mr. Walters's English-Welsh Dictionary, published in 1794.

‡ It is scarcely necessary to say, that the editors of the "Archaiology of Wales" are here contemplated. For this invaluable treasury of the ancient lore of the Cymry, the public are indebted to the late Mr. Owen Jones, a furrier in Thames-street, and a native of Denbighshire; of whom it is sufficient to say, that, by his disinterested and unexampled exertions on this occasion, he has imposed a debt of gratitude on his country, which no time can discharge. The work embraces, in three large volumes, the most important remains of Welsh literature, from the fifth to the close of the thirteenth century, which were all collected and published at the expense of Mr. Jones, without the slightest chance of an adequate remuneration. This patriotic individual died in 1814.

standing these defects, Dr. Davies's Dictionary will always be regarded as a production of standard excellence, and especially with reference to its collation of the Welsh with the Hebrew and other ancient languages, which, with the learned preface accompanying the work, proves the author to have been, in the language of one of his biographers, "a most exact critic, and an indefatigable searcher into ancient scripts*."

To the literary labours already specified, the author added a Welsh translation of the Thirty-nine Articles, and of Parsons's Christian Resolutions. He also made some considerable collections of Welsh poems and proverbs, which are still extant in manuscript†. But his hours were not exclusively devoted to literary employment: it was the occupation of his leisure rather than the serious business of his life. With his spiritual functions he united the civil duties of a magistrate; and the general respect and esteem, with which he was regarded by his countrymen, afford the most satisfactory proof of the exemplary manner in which he filled this twofold capacity. But his exertions for the public good were not confined to those of a professional nature. He devoted much of his private means to charitable and useful purposes; and it is recorded, that, among other acts of this character, he erected, at his own expense, three public bridges in the parish of Mallwyd, where he resided during the greatest part of his life.

The subject of this memoir was united, but at what period does not appear, to a sister of Rhys Wynn, Esq., of Llywnon, another of whose daughters was married to Bishop

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* See *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. i. p. 597.

† Some of these, in the hand-writing of Dr. Davies, exist in the Bodleian Library, and among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum.

Parry. There was no issue of this union; and whatever property in land Dr. Davies possessed he left between two nephews, one on his side and the other on that of his wife, a son of Bishop Parry, to whom he wished thus to testify the friendship he had entertained for his father. He died at Mallwyd, on the 15th of May, 1644, and was interred in the parochial church of that place.

Of the general endowments, whether natural or acquired, of Dr. John Davies, but little remains to be said. While at the university, we are told by Wood, he was reputed to possess a profound and critical knowledge of the ancient tongues, an intimate acquaintance with the history of his own country, and an indefatigable spirit of research into the writings of antiquity, especially such as were curious or rare. With these qualities he afterwards united a remarkable degree of perseverance in those particular studies, to which so great a portion of his life was dedicated; and, when their unprofitable nature in a mere pecuniary view is taken into consideration*, he must appear to have been actuated solely by a sincere and disinterested desire to diffuse a knowledge of his native tongue, and to vindicate its excellence. On this account he merits, that the gratitude of posterity should be added to the tribute of respect, which he received from his cotemporaries.

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* In a letter to Sir John Wynn, dated Nov. 3, 1623, he says, in allusion to Thomas ab William's work, which Sir John Wynn wished him to revise,—"Concerning the Dictionary, you know so great a volume cannot be printed without very great charge, which I know no printer will, by any means, undergo, being that printers conceive so small hope of gain by our Welsh books." It is to be hoped, that a change of times has effected a change also in this respect, more creditable to the public spirit of the country: but the circumstance may be noticed to prove that Dr. Davies could have entertained but little hope of profit from his literary speculations.

EDWARD LLWYD.

By a certain class of readers the labours of the lexicographer and the philologist are held in very little repute. The individuals, devoting themselves to such pursuits, are regarded as mere pioneers in the grand march of human science, destined only to clear that ground, which others are to have the glory of occupying. Whatever speciousness there may be in this opinion, it is nevertheless certain, that, as long as the knowledge of things is only to be attained through the medium of words, he, that extends the boundaries of philological learning, becomes an important contributor to the intellectual interests of his fellow-men.

Of such a nature were the benefits conferred on the literature of his country by the subject of the present memoir, whose reputation, as a philologist and antiquarian, will only be forgotten when the language and literature of Wales shall have ceased to be objects of interest.

Edward Llwyd was born, about the year 1670, at Llanvorda, in Cardiganshire, the residence of his family, which was of considerable respectability. In the year 1687, he became a member of Jesus College, Oxford, where he had for his tutor Dr. Plot, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum. It is, most probably, to this connection that we must ascribe his early attachment to natural history, in which he had made such rapid proficiency, that, upon Dr. Plot's resignation of his office, in 1690, as Keeper of the Museum, Llwyd, then only twenty years of age, was appointed his successor. He seems, upon receiving this appointment, to have devoted much of his time to the studies particularly connected

with it; and several papers by him, on subjects of natural history, may be seen in the Philosophical Transactions of that period*. It was not, however, until 1699, that he published his most important work of this character, entitled "Lithophylacii Britannici Iconographia," which was printed at the united expense of Lords Somers, Dorset, and Montague, Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Hans Sloane, and four other eminent characters, who were desirous of evincing, in this unusual manner, their respect for the writer's attainments and talents†. It is certain, then, that he had, at the time in question, arrived at a respectable rank in the republic of letters.

But, whatever attention he may have bestowed on the study of natural history, his favourite pursuit, and one to which his genius particularly inclined him, was the investigation of antiquities, and especially of such as related to this island. To this object he devoted himself at an early period with unwearied assiduity, and formed a very comprehensive project for illustrating the ancient languages and history of Great Britain. This, indeed, seems now to have become the grand aim of his existence, and, such was the general confidence in his peculiar qualifications for the undertaking, that a public subscription was established for enabling him to travel, with a view to the extension of his antiquarian and other researches‡.

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* See Nos. 166, 200, 206, 215, 229, 243, 269, 291, 334, 335, 336, 337, 462, and 467, all of which are the work of E. Llwyd. They relate chiefly to natural history; but there are also some on antiquarian and philological subjects.

† A new edition of this work, with the addition of several of Llwyd's letters on fossils, was published by J. Huddesford, in 1760.

‡ It appears that Llwyd was indebted principally, for the patronage and pecuniary assistance he received on this occasion, to the exertions of Sir Thomas Mansel, Bart., of Margam, to whom he accordingly dedicated the first volume of his "Archæologia."

The precise date of this event is uncertain, but it is to be inferred from some letters of Edward Llwyd, still extant, that he had completed his travels before 1701*, in which year, it also appears, he took his degree of Master of Arts. His travels occupied a space of five years, during which he visited Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, and Brittany; and the result of his journey was many valuable collections on antiquarian and philological subjects, as well as considerable additions to a cabinet of fossils he had previously formed, and which enabled him, on his return, to publish his principal production of this nature above noticed. But the main object of his travels was the collection of materials for his projected work on the antiquities of Great Britain; and, to judge from what he gave the world and the unpublished MSS. he left, his aim was accomplished with considerable success.

It appears, however, notwithstanding the rich fruit of his researches, that he had some obstacles to encounter in the countries through which he passed. Even in Wales, where he might least have anticipated any interruption of his laudable designs, it is said he was refused access to some principal libraries†, the owners of which must have been actuated by a narrowness of feeling, of which, it may be hoped, the examples were not numerous. His own account, indeed, is, that he "generally, throughout Wales, received the utmost civility from persons of all qualities, not only as to hospitality, but also in their readiness in communicating any MS., and in mentioning or shewing any thing in the neighbourhood, whether inscriptions or other

* See his letter to Mr. Davies of Llanerch, in the *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 320.

† This is stated in all the biographical notices which have yet appeared, and is also traditionally known in Wales.

particulars, that might seem to deserve notice*." The exceptions to this "general" practice, it may therefore be presumed, were but few; and many reasons may be assigned for Llwyd's omission to particularise them. He has, however, left room for conjecture in the names he has enumerated of those, to whose affability he was most indebted, among whom Sir Roger Mostyn, of Mostyn, in Flintshire, fills a conspicuous place. Besides his exclusion from certain libraries, our traveller had also to submit to the occasional ridicule of such as had not talent or generosity enough to comprehend the nature of his enterprise, and who, accordingly, seemed to ascribe it to a spirit of literary Quixotism, rather than to a rational thirst after the hidden stores of antiquity†. And, to crown the whole, while passing through France, with which country we were then at war, he had the misfortune to incur the suspicions of the French authorities, who caused him to be apprehended as a spy, and seized all his papers; but, after a short incarceration, he was released, through the interference of some persons of distinction in England, and permitted to resume his interesting researches‡.

In 1707,—about eight or nine years, we may presume, after the completion of his travels,—he published the first volume of his projected work, in folio, under the title of

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* See the English Preface to the "Archæologia Britannica."

† The passage, in which he alludes to this circumstance, occurs in the dedication prefixed to his "Archæologia," and is as follows: "The fatigues of five years' travels through the most retired parts of her Majesty's kingdoms I bore without reluctancy, and, which was the greater task, though always requisite in undertakings out of the common road, heard with patience the remarks of those whose education or natural talent disposed them to ridicule."

‡ His papers were, on this occasion, examined by several priests and Jesuits, to whom they were wholly unintelligible.

"Archæologia Britannica," devoted exclusively to "Glossography." It is divided into the ten following heads:—1. Comparative Etymology. 2. Comparative Vocabulary of the languages of Britain and Ireland. 3. An Armoric Grammar, translated out of the French*. 4. An Armoric English Vocabulary. 5. Some Words omitted in Dr. Davis's Dictionary. 6. A Cornish Grammar. 7. Catalogue of British MSS. 8. A British Etymology†. 9. A Brief Introduction to the Irish or ancient Scottish language. 10. An English-Irish Dictionary, with a Catalogue of Irish MSS.

The foregoing particulars bear abundant testimony to the learning and industry of the writer, who, it should also be mentioned, during the visits he made to the several countries before specified, acquired so perfect a knowledge of their respective languages, as to be able to write long prefaces in each on antiquarian or philological subjects. Had his life been sufficiently prolonged, it was his intention to publish another volume, at least, of the "Archæologia," which was to embrace a lexicographical history of British persons and places to be found in ancient records‡. The mass of interesting notices he had prepared for the execution of this plan leaves no doubt of the new light it would have thrown on the early history of the country, or of the addition it would have made to the well-merited fame of its author. But his premature death, united perhaps with the want of adequate encouragement, frustrated the design; and such detached notices, as he contributed to

* This was the work of Mr. Williams, the sub-librarian of the Ashmolean Museum.

† Principally by a Mr. Parry, who accompanied the author in most of his travels.

‡ See the Welsh Preface to the "Archæologia."

Gibson's edition of Camden's Britannia, and a few published by Carte, in 1786, are all that the public possess of the valuable materials he had amassed for the occasion.

It has been objected to the "Archæologia Britannica," that its orthography is of an unusual and pedantic description, and that it tends to obscure the language which it was the object of the work to illustrate. The letters, used by the author to express the peculiar sounds of the Welsh tongue, are, certainly, arbitrary, and such as have never been universally adopted by any other writer; but it must, at the same time, be conceded, that, with reference to the particular aim of his work,—the explanation of the Welsh and its kindred dialects to foreigners,—the letters, when once understood, are sufficiently adapted to the occasion. At least they have considerably the advantage, in this respect, of the received orthography of the Welsh language, which is distinguished by the singularity of adopting symbols for the representation of sounds, with which they have no alliance in the ordinary acceptation of the world*.

In March, 1709, the subject of this memoir was elected, by the University of Oxford, Esquire Beadle of Divinity; but he was not destined long to retain the office, as he

* The most objectionable letters of this nature in the Welsh alphabet are Dd, Ll, and F, which are used to represent Dh, Lh, and V. It is impossible now to account for the origin of these corruptions, and it were vain, perhaps, to hope for their abolition; for the law maxim of "malus usus abolendus est" seems to be of no weight in this instance. Of all these anomalies the substitution of F for V, and the consequent exclusion from the alphabet of the last mentioned letter, are the most extraordinary, and the most indefensible. The Cymmrodorion, or Metropolitan Cambrian Institution, have ventured to go so far in the work of reformation as to restore the V; but it does not appear, that the example has as yet been of any avail against the phalanx of prejudices, which stands up arrayed in defence of the popular absurdity.

breathed his last on the 29th of June in the same year. Although naturally of a robust constitution, his death, it is said, was, in a great measure, occasioned by his close application to study, but eventually accelerated by the accident of his having lain in an unaired room at the Ashmolean Museum*. He died at the early age of thirty-nine, and without ever having entered into the matrimonial state.

Of the abilities and erudition of Edward Llwyd his labours, especially his Archæology, are the most satisfactory evidence. For natural history he had a great taste, as also a most felicitous talent for the acquisition of languages. He may, therefore, be placed in the first rank among those natives of Wales, who have devoted themselves to philological literature, and, particularly, with reference to Welsh and its kindred dialects, of which he will ever be regarded as one of the ablest illustrators. It has been asserted that he was far from combining, with these acquirements, any genius for Welsh poetry, or even an accurate comprehension of its peculiar properties, which accounts, it is said, for the few poetical illustrations he has introduced into his work†. But this is to say no more than what has been said in a thousand cases,—that there are certain talents, which are not always compatible. It has, indeed, been observed that—

> One science only will one genius fit,
> So vast is art, so narrow human wit.

But the Life of Edward Llwyd disproves the infallibility of the rule, since he was, in an eminent degree, at once a philologist and a natural historian.

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* It appears from some anecdotes respecting E. Llwyd, published by a Mr. Jones, that it was by his own choice he lay at the Museum, notwithstanding the hazard to which he was obviously exposed.

† See Mr. Lewis Morris's Letter to Mr. Pegge, in the *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 370.

In his more private character the subject of the present memoir is related to have been cheerful and affable, and not more eager to acquire information than he was willing to impart it to others, deeming, in the well-known words of the poet, that

——the worst avarice is that of sense.

And, when the vast fund of learning, which he had accumulated in relation to the ancient history of this island, is considered, he must have been found a truly valuable oracle by all who wished to consult him. With the qualities here specified he united an indefatigable spirit of enterprise, which no obstacles could divert from its purpose. And he was, moreover, distinguished by this peculiarity, that, in his pursuit of any inquiry, he never was satisfied with the information he possessed, as long as better remained to be obtained. Hence, in his antiquarian researches, he was rarely, if ever, content with such knowledge as books alone could supply, but, where it was practicable, resorted to ocular proof. In his habits he was of a social turn, and delighted to relax himself, after the fatigues of study, in the company of men of literature and science, especially if they were also his countrymen. In this manner, while at Oxford, he commonly spent his evenings, enjoying that reciprocal intercourse of mind and talent, which forms, perhaps, the most fertile source of intellectual enjoyment.

An anecdote is related of him about the close of his life, which has, probably, reference to the social circle, to which he was thus attached. The famous Dr. Sacheverell, who seems to have been influenced by some unaccountable antipathy against the Welsh, had prevailed upon a person of the name of Holdsworth to write a satire on the nation, which gave birth to the well-known "Muscipula." Upon

the publication of the work, Sacheverell, with a malicious pleasure, presented a copy to Llwyd, saying, "Here, Mr. Llwyd, I give you a poem of banter upon your country, which I defy all your countrymen to answer." The Welshman, naturally irritated by this, resolved to take up the cause, and had recourse to Mr. Thomas Richards, then a student at Jesus College, and afterwards Rector of Llanvyllin, Montgomeryshire, to enter the lists against Holdsworth; at the same time suggesting the subject, and supplying him with numerous hints for the treatment of it. Richards, in the course of about a week, produced the "Hoglandia," the merit of which has been generally admitted. It underwent the revision and correction of Llwyd, who also wrote a caustic preface to it in elegant Latin. But, as he died before it was published, the preface was suppressed on account of its severity, and the one, which now accompanies it, substituted in its stead*. We may collect from this trivial incident, that Llwyd was strongly attached to the national characteristics of his country, and that, when they were assailed, he knew how to resent the affront.

As allusion has been made, in the progress of this memoir, to the unpublished MSS. of our great archæologist, some farther particulars respecting them may not be uninteresting here, and especially when considering the singular fate to which they have been exposed.

The MSS. in question were comprised in about one hundred and fifty volumes of various sizes, embracing, for the most part, ancient chronicles and poems, historical and antiquarian notices respecting the several countries visited

* In the composition of this Mr. Richards was assisted by Mr. Anthony Alsop, of Christ Church.

by the writer, with numerous transcripts of grants, rolls, charters, and other records of this description, relating particularly to Wales. There were also many MSS. on subjects of natural history, as well as several volumes of drawings connected with the objects of Llwyd's antiquarian researches. In the year 1713, about four years after the death of the owner, it was found necessary to dispose of this valuable collection for the benefit of his estate; and offers of it were accordingly made to the university of Oxford, to Jesus College, and to the Bishop of St. Asaph*. But, owing to some perverse and, as it has since proved, lamentable circumstances, the proposal was, in each case, rejected, and the MSS. became, eventually, the property of Sir Thomas Seabright, of Beechwood, in Hertfordshire. In the month of April, 1807, Sir John Seabright disposed of the whole collection by public auction; and such MSS., as related to the writer's historical and antiquarian investigations, became the property of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, Bart. Some years afterwards the greatest and most valuable portion of these interesting remains were transmitted to London for the purpose of being bound, and were unfortunately consumed in a fire, that destroyed the house of the person to whom they were entrusted. So, with the exception of the remaining portion still at Wynnstay, it is to be feared, scarcely a vestige now remains of the materials, which Edward Llwyd had prepared for the completion of his elaborate work†. To the admirers

* The refusal of this prelate to become the purchaser was owing to a quarrel he had recently had with Dr. Wynne, Principal of Jesus College.

† A more detailed account of this literary calamity may be seen in the *Cambro Briton*, vol. ii. p. 200, as well as in the "Transactions of the Cymmrodorion," vol. i. p. 173. But the account, in both instances, is, in some particulars, inaccurate, and especially in stating, that a portion of Mr.

of Welsh literature this is a subject for sincere regret. For, however unfinished and undigested the labours of this distinguished scholar and antiquary, they must still have proved of eminent value, and the more so, as it is scarcely possible, that similar talents and opportunities should again be combined to repair the chasm, which their loss has occasioned.

Llwyd's MSS. on antiquarian subjects became the property of the late Mr. Jones of Havod, and were destroyed in the fire which consumed his elegant mansion. It appears from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for 1807, vol. lxxvii. p. 420, that Sir W. W. Wynn, as above mentioned, was the sole purchaser of the MSS. alluded to.

LEWIS MORRIS.

THE subject of the present memoir is one of those individuals, who have owed their literary celebrity more to the popular reputation they have acquired, than to any works which have appeared under their names. Although respected in the highest degree among his cotemporaries, for his profound knowledge of the history and antiquities of his native country, as well as for his general information, Lewis Morris is as yet known to posterity by but few proofs of his learning or genius. His countrymen, however, whether of his own or subsequent times, have, with one consent, acknowledged the justice of his title to these prescriptive honours; and it would ill become us to cast any suspicion on the propriety of this decision, by excluding his name from a work, so peculiarly designed to commemorate the virtues and talents of the Principality.

Lewis Morris was born at a place called Pentrev Eirianell, in the parish of Penrhos Llugwy, in the island of Anglesey, on St. David's Day, in the year 1702. His father originally followed the humble occupation of a cooper, but became afterwards a corn-dealer. As Lewis was the youngest of five children, it is not probable that he derived any great benefit from education. On the contrary, the only advantages he seems to have enjoyed in this respect, were such as his native village school could supply. These must have consisted of mere rudimental instruction of the commonest sort, and of such an imperfect introduction to the English language, as was customary in the retired parts of Wales, at the period in question. Welsh, indeed, was

the language of his infancy, and he learnt English afterwards, as he himself tells us, as an Englishman would learn French or any other foreign tongue *. Yet, such was the buoyancy of his natural talents, that it raised him above all these disadvantages; and his self-improvement during his after-life abundantly compensated for these early deficiencies.

Although Lewis Morris's father filled so humble a sphere, he contrived to place all his sons in creditable situations; and two of them, besides Lewis, were distinguished by their literary turn and general abilities †. Lewis was, at an early period, initiated in the business of a land-surveyor, to which, however, he never entirely confined himself. Accident or patronage soon procured for him a post under government, as collector of the customs and salt-duties at Holyhead. In this capacity he continued, in all probability, several years, during which period it does not appear that he was much distinguished by those literary propensities, for which he was subsequently remarkable. In the year 1737 he exchanged the office, he thus held in Anglesey, for an appointment under the Admiralty, by whom he was commissioned to take what he himself calls "an hydrographical survey of the coast of Wales ‡," a part of which was published in 1748.

* See his letter to Mr. Pegge in the *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 368.

† William Morris, who filled an office in the customs at Holyhead, was a good Welsh scholar and botanist, and was a great collector of old MSS. Richard was also well versed in his native tongue, and was selected, in consequence, to superintend the two editions of the Welsh Bible in 1746 and 1752. He was also a good Welsh poet. Through the interest of his brother Lewis, he was, for many years, first clerk in the Navy Office.

‡ See his letter to Mr. Pegge, above quoted.

It was during the time, in which he was occupied in making this survey, we may presume, that he first directed his attention, in any serious degree, to those topographical and antiquarian researches, in which he is known to have delighted, and for which the occasion must have afforded him so many opportunities. However, about the year last mentioned, his employment under the Admiralty was brought to a conclusion, and he was soon afterwards nominated surveyor of the crown lands in Wales, collector of the customs at Aberdyvi, and superintendent of the royal mines in the Principality. In this latter capacity he wrote an historical account of the mineralogy of the country, within the sphere of his occupation; but the work, whatever may have been its merit, was never published. Of these three offices the only one he retained for any length of time was the last, and that, as appears from his own account, without any emolument.

Lewis Morris's residence at this time, and indeed during the remainder of his life, was at Penbryn, in Cardiganshire, a house, which belonged to him in right of his second wife. At this place he devoted his leisure hours to the improvement of his mind in various branches of knowledge, but, as might be expected in a person of his irregular education, without any fixed aim. From the natural strength of his intellect, however, he was enabled to make considerable proficiency in natural philosophy and mathematics, to which he had been attached from his childhood, in addition to those antiquarian pursuits, with which he was more peculiarly conversant. Music and botany also engaged much of his attention, and his success in the latter, which he describes as a "favourite study," united with a smattering in physic and surgery, made his house the

common resort of his poorer neighbours, who were often indebted to his medical skill, inconsiderable as it was, for the relief of their ailments.

But, whatever time he may have devoted to these desultory pursuits, his paramount literary occupation was always the history and antiquities of his native land, and in which he was, from the natural bent of his mind, pre-eminently qualified to excel. It is this peculiarity in his intellectual character, that especially recommends him to these pages, which, as there have been former opportunities for remarking, are exclusively dedicated to the commemoration of those natives of Wales, whose worth or genius has been identified with the fame of their country. In this respect, however unknown to public reputation the fruits of his labours, Lewis Morris stands conspicuous. He had not only devoted considerable time to the enlargement of Dr. Davies's Dictionary, but had also planned a lexicographical work of his own, not very dissimilar from that projected by Edward Llwyd, as noticed in the life of that individual. In one of his letters, still extant, he minutely describes the nature of his project, and, as it is known he had made considerable progress in it, his own words may not be unacceptable here.

In a letter to Mr. Pegge, the antiquary, dated February 11, 1761, he says*:—"What has taken up my chief attention for a good while past is making additions to Dr. Davies's British Latin Dictionary, and also another Dictionary entirely my own, on the plan of Mareni, which has taken up my spare hours for many years. I call it 'Celtic Remains,' or the ancient Celtic empire described in the English tongue, being a biographical, critical, historical,

* See the *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 369.

etymological, chronological, and geographical collection of Celtic materials towards a British history in ancient times, in two parts. The first contains the ancient British and Gaulish names of men, places, actions, &c., in an alphabetical order, wherein not only the true and real Celtic names are discussed, in the ancient and modern orthography, proved from British authors, and the present names of places, &c., but also the mistakes and errors, whether wilful or accidental, of the several writers, who have treated of the ancient affairs of Britain in any language, are explained and rectified. This is a laborious and great work. The second part contains the Latinized Celtic names of men and places, used by Latin writers who have modelled and twisted them to their own language, with an attempt to shew what they were in the original Celtic, by comparing them with ancient history and the language of the principal branches or dialects of that people, the British or Welsh, the Irish, the Armoric, and the Cornish. This part is, in a great measure, etymological, where fancy has her swing, though kept within bounds as much as possible."

To the execution of this project he devoted a great portion of his leisure hours; and the partial result of his labours (for he did not live to complete them) remains still unpublished, and is in the possession of a distinguished Welsh scholar, who has long promised to favour the world with it. And it is to be hoped, that he has not abandoned his design; since, however imperfect the collections in question may be with reference to the original plan, they cannot fail to prove a valuable acquisition to the general stock of Welsh literature*.

* The Rev. Walter Davies, of Manavon, Montgomeryshire, is the gentleman here alluded to, and, in the second volume of the *Cambrian Register*,

Besides the pursuits already enumerated, the fascinations of the muse had also their attractions for Lewis Morris, who, in early life, had distinguished himself as a Welsh poet, and particularly in pieces of satire and humour. He became, in consequence, in his maturer years, the oracle of such of his young countrymen as happened to be "smit with the love of song;" and among these were the Rev. Evan Evans, author of "Dissertatio de Bardis," and the Rev. Goronw Owen, who became aftewards so celebrated as a votary of the Welsh muse. Nor was his assistance confined to mere literary advice. It was through his bounty that the last mentioned individual was supported in his studies at Oxford; and, as he had the good fortune to discover his talents, he had thus the generosity to reward them. Nor was this a solitary instance of his liberal feeling in this respect. He was also the means of elevating into public notice a harper of the name of Parry, whose skill was unrivalled among the Welsh musicians of that day, and whose name is still associated with some of the happiest recollections of the national minstrelsy.

During the latter years of his life, Lewis Morris seems to have suffered severely under a complication of the most serious disorders*, which, at length, terminated his existence on the 11th day of April, 1765, in the sixty-third

published in 1796, it was announced that he was *then* "preparing the work for publication, with numerous additions and improvements." As he has since that time had the benefit of something more than the "viginti annorum lucubrationes" for this purpose, it cannot be unreasonable to indulge a hope that the reverend gentleman's countrymen will soon be favoured with this literary *desideratum*. He must be aware that he has already greatly transgressed the Horatian rule.

* Several of his letters, written in the years 1759, 1760, and 1761, bear testimony to the melancholy state of his health, which, he says, was assailed by ague, dropsy, and asthma.

year of his age. His remains were interred at Llanbadarn Vawr, in the county of Cardigan.

The subject of this brief memoir was twice married. His first wife, to whom he was united in 1729, was a Miss Griffith, an heiress of Ty Wrdyn, near Holyhead, by whom he had three children, a son and two daughters. His second marriage with Miss Lloyd of Penbryn, the place of his subsequent residence, was celebrated in 1749; and nine children, five sons and four daughters, were the fruit of this union.

Of the talents and attainments of Lewis Morris we are to judge rather, as has already been intimated, by the popular credit they have obtained, than by any proofs of them, which he himself has bequeathed to posterity. His "Celtic Remains," if made public, might assist us in forming a more satisfactory estimate of his pretensions to the reputation he has thus acquired. But, at present, some Welsh poems, published in the "Diddanwch Teuluaidd," and a portion of his literary correspondence*, embrace all the written evidence which we possess on this point. His letters, however, bear abundant testimony to the diligence of his researches, and the ingenuity of his conjectures, on points connected with the history and antiquities of his country. Among his correspondents he numbered Mr. Pegge, already mentioned, and Mr. Carte, the historian, both of whom seem to have held him in high estimation. The former, upon one occasion, in a letter to a third person, speaks of him as "an excellent scholar, and a perfect

* This may be seen, principally, in the first and second volumes of the *Cambrian Register*. There are also, we believe, a few unpublished letters of his among the Collection of MSS. belonging to the Cymmrodorion, formerly the property of Mr. Owen Jones.

master of his own country's language and history*;" and the latter was indebted to him for many hints in illustration of his History of England, especially the earlier parts of it.

The numerous avocations in which Lewis Morris was engaged during the greater portion of his life, united with the competence of his pecuniary circumstances, may account for his not having appeared in the character of an author. What he wanted leisure to accomplish he was not urged by necessity to undertake. In a letter to one of his friends, dated March 28, 1760, he says, "You wonder that I should deal out my knowledge in antiquities by retail, and in letters, and not print something for the good of the public. I never have as yet been in those easy circumstances as to afford time to publish any thing that way correctly, nor in those indigent circumstances, as to be obliged to do it out of necessity†." It was the intervals of business alone, therefore, that he could devote to his favourite pursuits; and it may be assumed, that, on such occasions, he was actuated merely by an attachment to the pursuits themselves, without reference either to profit or fame.

During the progress of his researches into the history and literature of his native country, he formed a considerable collection of Welsh MSS., which are now deposited in the Welsh school in London‡. Whatever may be the value of these, they must be regarded as an additional tes-

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* See Mr. Pegge's letter to Dr. Phillips, in the *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 355.

† See his letter to Mr. Edward Richards, *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 347.

‡ The Catalogue of this collection may be seen in the *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 445. The volumes are about eighty in number, and some of them very valuable.

timony to the zeal and industry with which he prosecuted his inquiries into those branches of learning, to which his mind seems to have been so happily adapted; and they may serve also to enhance our regret, that the memorials he has left of his attainments are not more numerous and more satisfactory.

THOMAS PENNANT, ESQ.

The literary annals of this country supply many instances of the union of high talents with the splendid advantages of birth and fortune, and of the laudable co-operation of these in promoting the interests of philosophy and of learning. Of all these examples none merits our regard more particularly than the subject of this memoir. However elevated above the necessity of resorting to the occupation of an author as a means of subsistence, his whole life was one of unwearied literary activity, eminently creditable to himself, and of distinguished usefulness to the world. The most powerful motives, under which some authors may be supposed to have written, never produced greater exertions in this respect than those of Pennant, influenced, as they wholly were, by a voluntary attachment to literature and science.

Thomas Pennant was descended from a long line of ancestors *, who had, for some centuries, filled a high rank among the gentry of North Wales: he was born at Downing, in Flintshire, the ancient seat of his family †, on the

* Among these was the celebrated Tudyr Trevor, who lived in a remote age, and who, from the number of distinguished families that trace their descent from him, may justly be regarded as having added another tribe to the fifteen commonly appropriated to North Wales. See a short note respecting these in page 319, *suprà*. The heir of Downing was always regarded as the *Pencenedl*, or head of the family of that name, resembling the chief of a clan in Scotland.

† The patrimonial estate, anciently called Bichton, is situated in the parish of Whitford, in the county of Flint. It originally came into the Pennant family in the time of Gruffydd ab Cynan, Prince of North Wales, in

fourteenth of June, 1726. He received the rudimental part of his education at Wrexham, in Denbighshire, and from thence he removed to Oxford. As early as the age of twelve, Pennant first contracted that taste for the study of natural history, by which his subsequent life was so strongly marked. This was occasioned by the perusal of a work on ornithology, with which he was presented by one of his friends. About eight years afterwards, during a tour into Cornwall, the passion thus awakened received a new impulse, through the friendly encouragement of Dr. William Borlase, who directed his attention, in a particular manner, to the study of fossils and minerals, thus enlarging the sphere of his literary enjoyment, and furnishing a new scope for the exercise of his genius.

In the year 1754 Pennant visited Ireland with the view of extending his favourite researches; but, after traversing a great part of the island, he did not derive much benefit from his excursion. "Such," to use his own words, "was the conviviality of the country, that his journal proved as *maigre* as his entertainment was *gras;* so it was never a dish fit to be set before the public *." In the same year he was elected a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, which evinces, that he had, at this period, united an attachment

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the twelfth century. Gruffydd bestowed it upon Philip O'Phicdan, one of the chieftains who had followed him from Ireland, and who afterwards married the daughter of Madog ab Meilyr, Mr. Pennant's ancestor. In allusion to his family seat, in his "History of Whitford and Holywell," Mr. Pennant says, "I have Cowley's wish realized, a small house and a large garden." Since his death, however, Downing has been considerably enlarged by his son, David Pennant, Esq., the present worthy proprietor. The house was built in 1627, by John Pennant, Esq.

* See his "Literary Life," written by himself, page 2. It may be proper here to notice, that, for a considerable portion of this imperfect memoir, the writer is indebted to the interesting work here quoted.

to antiquarian pursuits with his other literary predilections. But his partiality for natural history still continued to maintain an ascendancy, and it may be considered a sufficient proof of the proficiency he had attained in it, to state, that, in 1755, he entered into a correspondence with the celebrated Linnæus, to whom he transmitted, two years afterwards, a description of a *concha anomia* recently discovered, which, having been read before the Royal Society of Upsal, caused him to be elected a member of that body. In his "Literary Life" he speaks of this mark of distinction as the "greatest of his literary honours," and especially as it had been obtained at the instance of Linnæus himself. His correspondence with this eminent naturalist continued until the age and infirmities of the latter brought it reluctantly to a close*.

In the year 1760 he resigned his fellowship in the Society of Antiquaries, owing to a desire he felt to devote himself more exclusively to his studies and the tranquillity of a private life, uninterrupted by those duties, which his continuance in the society might seem to exact from him. His recent marriage, and, as he himself states, his comparatively contracted income, during his father's life-time, may also have conduced to this event, by supplying additional motives for this temporary retirement.

Pennant had, about this period, laid the foundation of his "British Zoology," his first great work, and that upon which his reputation as a naturalist will ever materially rest. The first portion of this work, embellished with a hundred and thirty-two plates, was published in 1765; and it is highly to the credit of the author, that he designed the profits to be applied to the benefit of the Welsh charity-

* Linnæus died in the year 1778.

school in London. But his inexperience in literary undertakings, and the loss to which he was consequently exposed, were the means of defeating his benevolent intention, which, however, he was enabled to carry partially into effect, some years subsequently, upon the publication of the second edition*.

His zoological researches were interrupted, in 1765, by a tour which he made on the continent, in the course of which he visited the most remarkable places in France, Germany, and Holland. He here became acquainted with most of the distinguished literary characters of the age, among whom were Buffon, Voltaire†, the two Gesners, and Pallas; and the reception he experienced from them proves that his fame had preceded him. Buffon, in particular, whose praise must have been peculiarly valuable, expressed himself in the most favourable terms of his labours in natural history. Some literary bickerings had, indeed, taken place between them previous to their personal acquaintance, but the cordiality with which they met at Paris, proved that the asperity of the controversy had not survived the occasion of it. And it ought to be added to the credit of Buffon, that, with the liberality of a man of genius, he made ample atonement for any hostility he might have felt

* Another instance of his benevolent disposition, connected with this work, may here be related. Mr. Richard Morris, brother of Lewis Morris, a notice of whose life has already appeared, had been his agent in the publication of this work, and, upon his death, Mr. Pennant permitted his widow, then in confined circumstances, to retain the plates, and make what advantage she could of them.

† Of his visit to Voltaire Pennant thus speaks: "At Jersey I visited that wicked wit Voltaire. He happened to be in good humour, and was very entertaining; but, in his attempt to speak English, he satisfied us, that he was perfect master of our oaths and our curses." See his "Literary Life," page 6.

towards his rival, by the respect with which he frequently afterwards quoted his name, and made use of his authority*.

The friendship which Pennant formed also, on this occasion, with the celebrated Pallas, was not less sincere, nor less honourable to the feelings of both; and our countryman, in noticing the event, seems to have regarded it as forming an important epoch in his life, since it was the means to giving birth to his "History of Quadrupeds," one of his best productions. His epistolary intercourse with Pallas continued many years, and, as he acknowledges, "to his great instruction," and only ceased when the official duties, in which the latter was engaged under the government of Russia, compelled him to relinquish all his private correspondence. But Pennant long afterwards continued to receive proofs of his unaltered attachment.

Not long after our author's return from his continental tour, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and, in 1768, he published a second edition of such part of his "British Zoology" as had already appeared, and the produce of which, as previously noticed, he appropriated to a charitable institution. In the following year he added to the work another volume, relating exclusively to the reptiles and fishes of this island; and the whole work, comprised in three volumes, he subsequently enriched with a hundred and three additional plates, and much new matter†.

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* Pennant, in alluding, in his "Literary Life," to this literary contest, says, "our blows were light, and, I hope, neither of us received any material injury."

† These additions appeared in a supplementary volume in 1770. A new edition of the whole work, in three volumes octavo, has been published since the death of the author.

The mind of Pennant, as he himself truly observes*, was not formed to stagnate: it was always in a state of progression. No sooner had he exhausted one subject than he was employed on another; and the elasticity of his genius abundantly supported the natural buoyancy of his disposition. Nor did he confine himself to mental exertion alone: his bodily activity, while his physical powers lasted, was always, at least, as great. Thus, in the year 1769, when he had completed his "British Zoology," he published, in conjunction with Sir Joseph Banks and Mr. Gideon Lotent†, several papers on Indian Zoology: these were entirely written by Mr. Pennant, the two individuals just mentioned joining merely in the expense of the plates that embellished them. Of this work little is now known in England; but it is sufficient for its reputation to say, that it was considered worthy of republication on the continent, both in German and Latin. In the same year he undertook his first journey to the extreme confines of Scotland, which, from the comparative ignorance that then prevailed respecting the country, must have been regarded as an enterprise of no ordinary description. But it is not on account of any difficulties, real or imaginary, which Pennant may have surmounted on this occasion, that this incident is noticed; it is because the frank and intelligent description, which he gave of the country and its inhabitants, first served to dissipate the prejudices of the English respecting their northern brethren, and opened the door to that friendly intercourse between the two nations,

* See his "Literary Life," p. 9.

† This gentleman had previously been governor of some of the Dutch islands in the East Indies, where he had made many valuable discoveries in natural history, all of which he very liberally communicated to Mr. Pennant, permitting him, at the same time, to make what use he pleased of them.

which has never since been suspended. Surely, then, it is no mean praise to be able to say of him, that he was thus the founder of a system of conciliation, which had for its basis patriotism, and philanthropy for its object. And the flattering communications he received, upon the first publication of his Tour in 1771, bear ample testimony to the practical utility of his exertions*.

During the year, in which Mr. Pennant visited Scotland, he was honoured by the Royal Academy of Drontheim with being elected a member of that body; and, in 1771, the University of Oxford paid a similar tribute to his literary reputation, by conferring on him, in full convocation, the degree of Doctor of Laws, on which occasion his name was introduced in a manner the most complimentary. The satisfaction, therefore, which the "laudari à laudatis viris" may be supposed to supply, must have been enjoyed in an eminent degree by the subject of this memoir.

In 1772 Pennant made a second journey into Scotland for the purpose of pursuing, or rather of completing, his praiseworthy designs respecting that country, in his route through which he received many gratifying marks of the estimation in which his exertions had been already held. Not only was he loaded with the thanks and compliments of private individuals, but many corporate towns, and Edin-

* On this occasion, he says, he "laboured earnestly to conciliate the affections of the two nations, so wickedly and studiously set at variance by evil-designing people." Among the many "very flattering letters" which he received on the publication of his tour, was one from the Earl of Kinnoul, in which that nobleman says, "I have perused your book, for which I return my hearty thanks, with the greatest pleasure. Every reader must admire the goodness of the author's heart; and the inhabitants of this part of the kingdom should express the warmest gratitude for your candid representation of them and their country." This, it will be seen by the sequel, was done in the most liberal manner.

burgh among the number, presented him with their freedom, so that, as he himself says, "he returned rich in civic honours*." Nor were these rewards bestowed upon him for mere speculative benefits: he was the means, by the suggestions he offered, of forming several public establishments, especially fisheries, which proved ultimately productive of the most solid national advantages. From Scotland he extended his tour, on this occasion, to the Hebrides, and, in 1774, published an account of the whole, illustrated by many interesting engravings.

The spirit of travelling, with the view especially of making topographical discoveries within the British dominions, seems, at this period, exclusively to have possessed the mind of Pennant. From the commencement of the year 1773, to the close of 1777, he was almost entirely engaged in visiting various parts of the island†, and, in the early part of the period in question, he made an excursion to the Isle of Man; but the accidental loss of the notes he took on

* See his "Literary Life," p. 16.

† His tours on this occasion were, principally, in the northern counties of England; but he also visited several other parts of the kingdom. And all his journies, he tells us, were made on horseback, a mode of travelling for which his partiality continued to the latest part of his life. While at Buckingham, in 1776, to adopt his own words, he "narrowly escaped a death suited to an antiquary": the old church, which he had visited in the morning, fell down a few hours afterwards, and he thus escaped being buried in its ruins.—See his "Literary Life," p. 24. During all his journies, alluded to in this note, he was accompanied by Moses Griffith, a self-taught artist and native of Wales, whom Mr. Pennant had taken under his patronage and protection. His talent for drawing, as the illustrations of Pennant's works abundantly prove, was very great; and the public are, no doubt, indebted to him for numerous interesting scenes, as well as sketches of antiquarian remains, that might otherwise have never been known. The genius of this man was, indeed, of the highest order, and of a remarkable versatility.—He was not only a limner, but a good engraver.—See the "Literary Life," *passim*.

the latter occasion has deprived the public of the benefit of his observations. His other tours have been published at different times, and serve to confirm the opinion, previously formed, of the candour and discrimination which he employed in all his topographical researches. Topography, indeed, next to natural history, appears to have been his favourite pursuit; and, in this interesting department of literature, few, if any, have united the "utile dulci" with happier effect.

In 1778 Pennant published the first volume of his "Tour in North Wales," a work which particularly recommends him to these pages*. In addition to a great fund of valuable topographical information, it abounds in interesting historical, and biographical sketches, connected with that part of the principality. This work has become the basis, on which most subsequent tourists in North Wales have erected their literary superstructures; and the general accuracy of its details abundantly justifies the distinction†.

After the year 1777 Pennant's ardour for visiting different countries had considerably subsided, or seems rather altogether to have declined. A second matrimonial connexion, which he formed soon afterwards with the sister of Sir Roger Mostyn, Bart., of Mostyn, in Flintshire, gave, as he tells us‡, new charms to his fire-side; and his literary labours were, in consequence, for a few years, chiefly

* The second and last volume of the tour, under the title of "A Journey to Snowdon," appeared in 1781.

† Mr. Pennant, in all his journies through Wales, was accompanied by the Rev. John Lloyd, of Caerwys, an eminent Welsh scholar and antiquary, to whom he acknowledges himself considerably indebted for much valuable information, which he might not otherwise have obtained.

‡ See his "Literary Life," p. 31.

confined to miscellaneous papers, and the revisal of his former productions. In 1782, however, he published a new topographical work, entitled "A Journey from Chester to London," which was the result of the frequent excursions he had made along that road, and of which, according to his constant practice on such occasions, he had kept accurate journals. This little work bears the same character as the rest of our author's tours: it is at once instructive and entertaining.

Notwithstanding the number and variety to which Pennant's literary labours had already extended, the mental vigour of the author continued still unabated, and his mine of intelligence unexhausted. Two years after his "Journey from Chester to London" appeared, he published his last great work on natural history, under the title of "Arctic Zoology," which embraces, in two volumes, an interesting history of the animals of North America, as well as of those of the northern parts of Europe and Asia. This work was soon afterwards translated into German* and French, and was also very favourably received in America, where it procured for the author the distinction of being selected a member of the Philosophical Society at Philadelphia. He had previously had a similar, and, it may be added, a greater honour conferred on him by the Royal Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, as also by the Antiquarian Societies of Edinburgh and Perth†. In 1787 he enlarged his "Arctic Zoology" by a supplement, comprising a systematic de-

* This was done by Professor Zimmerman, with whom Pennant had long been on terms of particular intimacy, and to whom he expresses his obligation for much information of the greatest importance to his researches in natural history.

† These events happened in the years 1784 and 1785.

scription of the reptiles and fishes of North America, as well as several other interesting additions to the original work.

It might be considered tedious to dwell, with any minuteness, on the remaining works of this voluminous yet agreeable writer. It may sufficiently answer the aim of this humble memoir, and do equal justice to the literary reputation of Pennant, to give a general account of the principal labours, to which the latter years of his valuable life were devoted. In 1790 he published his "History of London," a work replete with the usual store of anecdote, whether historical, antiquarian, or biographical, which distinguishes all his productions of this nature; and the avidity with which it was received by the public, as well as the many editions of it that have since appeared, abundantly vindicates its claim to popular favour. To this production succeeded, in 1793, his "Literary Life," which gives a minute and unassuming detail of his literary labours down to that period, and to which these pages are, of necessity, considerably indebted. Among the works of his latter years is his "History of the Parishes of Whitford and Holywell," of which, from his local advantages, united with the particular nature of his pursuits, he was peculiarly qualified to give an interesting description. The work, therefore, as may be conjectured, is enlivened by his accustomed variety of historical and antiquarian research, though obviously written with all the excusable partiality of one, who felt an ardent attachment to the land of his birth*.

In the beginning of 1798, at no very remote distance from the close of his active and useful career, appeared the first two volumes of his "Outlines of the Globe," which he had projected some years before, and of which, as its title imports, the plan was most comprehensive. Such was Pennant's in-

* This was published in 1796.

defatigable industry, that, in the short space of four years*, he had prepared nearly the whole work, embracing fourteen quarto volumes, for publication, and two of them, in addition to those published by the author, have, since his death, been given to the world by his son, David Pennant, Esq. This valuable production, as it was his last, may be regarded as the appropriate apex of that literary monument, which the author has so honourably reared to his memory†. To his numerous lucubrations, of a less important nature than those specifically noticed, a general allusion has already been made. Besides some political observations, which the turbulent spirit of the times occasionally drew from his pen, they embrace tracts, of a more permanent character, on questions of science, and especially natural history; nor are these unaccompanied by the sallies of humour, or the strains of the muse‡.

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* See his "Literary Life," p. 41, where he tells us, that, with the exception of one volume, the whole work was composed in the time above mentioned.

† The plan of this work is an imaginary voyage to all the known countries of the globe, and the following are the words in which the writer gives an account of his project, or rather of what he had then accomplished. "Respecting these countries," he says, "I have collected every information possible, from books ancient and modern, from the most authentic and some living travellers of the most respectable characters of my time. I mingle history, natural history, accounts of the coasts, climates, and every thing which I thought could instruct or amuse. They are written on imperial quarto, and, when bound, make a folio of no inconsiderable size, and are illustrated, at a vast expense, by prints taken from books, or by charts and maps, and by drawings by the skilful hand of Moses Griffith, and by presents from friends. With the bare possibility of the volumes relative to India, none of these books are to be printed in my life-time, but to rest on my shelves, the amusement of my advancing age."—See his "Literary Life," p. 40. The four volumes already published are those here alluded to relating to India. It may be hoped, however, that the literary world is yet to be favoured with some other portion of this interesting production.

‡ Among his lighter productions may be noticed his "Remarks on the

But Pennant's literary labours were not confined to those works only, of which he was the sole author. He promoted several others, to which he not only extended his patronage and encouragement, as well as his literary aid, but, in some instances, most liberally underwent the expense of the publication. Mr. Lightfoot's "Flora Scotica," and Mr. Cordiner's "Antiquities and Scenery of the North of Scotland," may be particularly noticed as illustrative of Pennant's generosity in this respect, and tend, in an eminent degree, to prove the disinterestedness of his views in all his literary designs, which were ever more directed to the public information and the advancement of letters, than to his own private emolument*.

Pennant's own account of himself, in his "Literary Life," terminates in 1793, to the close of which year his health and felicity had experienced but few encroachments†: a "mens sana in corpore sano" had been his peculiar good fortune. Early in the following year the scene began to present a lowering aspect: the illness and subsequent death of a beloved and amiable daughter threw a shade of melancholy

Patagonians," "Free Thoughts on the Militia Laws," "Letter from a Welsh Freeholder to his Representative," "Letter to a Member of Parliament on Mail-Coaches," several poems and pieces of humour, with a variety of papers on natural history, which have been inserted in the "Philosophical Transactions."

* Among the productions promoted by Pennant, may be mentioned several translations of topographical works, by Dr. John Reinhold Foster, He also assisted Gough in his edition of Camden's Britannia, in that part especially relating to North Wales. The "Flora Scotica," above mentioned, which was printed entirely at Pennant's expense, embraces two octavo volumes, and is illustrated by thirty-seven plates. It appeared in 1777.

† For the substance of what is here related respecting the latter years of Mr. Pennant's life, this memoir is indebted to the notices on the subject by the present David Pennant, Esq. in his Preface to the third volume of the "Outlines of the Globe."

over his spirits, which was never afterwards entirely removed. In 1795 he had also the misfortune to fracture the patella of one of his knees, while descending a flight of stairs, and continued to suffer, more or less, from the accident during the remainder of his life. It was not, however, until 1796, that his bodily ailments were on the point of assuming a more serious character: about this time he was first afflicted with several pulmonary symptoms, that indicated the approach of some dangerous malady. He still persevered, however, in devoting his leisure hours to literary occupations, and, during the greatest part of 1797, was busily engaged, both in revising his works already published, and in preparing others for the press, thus proving that the vigour of his mind had triumphed over his corporal sufferings.

For some time the natural strength of his constitution continued to support him under his increasing infirmities; but, towards the close of 1798, swellings in the legs, and other alarming prognostics, announced that the fatal crisis of his disorder was at no great distance. But his usual buoyancy of spirits, supported by a resignation which is the necessary result of habitual piety, did not wholly forsake him: he contemplated his approaching end with true Christian fortitude, and, on the sixteenth day of December, 1798, while in his seventy-third year, resigned his breath in the arms of his family, and accompanied by the sincere regret of a large circle of friends.

Of the general character of the subject of this memoir it might be said, in a few words, that in his religious principles he was strictly orthodox, and consequently a staunch friend to the established church; in his politics zealously and sincerely devoted to the true spirit of the constitution; and exemplary in the fulfilment of all the duties of private

life. To say this of him might be sufficient for all the purposes of an honest and dignified reputation; yet it cannot but be more satisfactory to the reader to receive the testimony of his son, the present respectable representative of this ancient family*, who, in the place adverted to in a preceding note, has supplied the following interesting and more copious information upon the subject.—"His religious principles," says the writer, "were pure and fervent, yet exempt from bigotry. Though firmly attached to the established church, he, by his writings and conduct, conciliated the esteem of those of a different persuasion. A steady friend to our excellent constitution, he ever laboured to preserve it entire. This induced him to petition for the reform of some abuses during the administration of Lord North, at a period, when the influence of the crown was supposed to have exceeded its due bounds. This brought him forward, in later times, with additional energy, to resist the democratic spirit, which threatened tenfold evils†. The duties of a magistrate he exercised with candour, and with a temperate yet zealous warmth to protect the oppressed. His benevolence to the poor was unbounded, and his repeated exertions to relieve the wants of a populous neigh-

* The eldest son of this gentleman was married, in 1822, to the only daughter of the Duke of Marlborough, but has lately been left a widower.

† This alludes, it may be presumed, to an association of sixteen parishes in the county of Flint, which took place in 1792, for the purpose of resisting the revolutionary principles then spreading throughout the country. Mr. Pennant presided at the first meeting, which was attended by many individuals of the first distinction in the neighbourhood; and the association proved afterwards of material service in stemming the tide of disaffection to which it was opposed. It may be added, that Mr. Pennant was principally instrumental in the formation of this society, some account of which may be seen in the Appendix to his "Literary Life," p. 135—140.

bourhood, by the importation of corn in times of scarcity, were truly munificent. Temperate in diet, he enjoyed the fruits of abstinence, and, until a few years previous to his decease, possessed an unusual share of health and vigour. His conversation was lively, replete with instruction, and brilliant with sallies of true humour; yet too great sensibility at times lowered his natural flow of spirits, and occasioned severe dejection."

This general portrait of Pennant,—which, it may be hoped, will not be deemed less valuable, because dictated by filial affection,—leaves nothing material to be supplied. Something, however, may be added with respect to the lighter traits of his character. With the cheerfulness of disposition which he commonly enjoyed, he united a particular attachment to the convivial circle*, especially when enlivened by wit, or refined by intelligence; and, from his own qualifications in this respect, we may conclude how much he must have contributed, on such an occasion, to the common enjoyment. To the world of fashion too, where his literary distinction, not less than his rank in society, made him at all times a welcome visitor, he was constant in his devoirs†, omitting no opportunity to temper the severity of his literary pursuits by a participation in that innocent gaiety, which, while it relaxes the mind, seldom fails also to improve and enlarge the understanding. The general amenity and benevolence of his disposition have already been partially alluded to; and of these his affectionate notice of his parents in his "History of Whitford and Holywell," and the attachment which he evinced to a

* See his "Literary Life," p. 11.

† Ibid.

favourite servant, as described in the same work, may be selected as instances*. But his whole life was in happy accordance with these amiable characteristics. To say that he possessed, with these, no particular foibles, would be to assert that he had triumphed over the doom of our common nature; but they were such as might be identified with those eccentricities, which have often been found allied with the brightest genius, and are not incompatible with the most eminent virtues. They were those light shades, which only served to render more brilliant the loftier tints of the picture.

On Pennant's literary reputation it may not be necessary to dwell very long, after the occasional remarks on the subject that have appeared in the progress of this memoir. His genius, if not of the highest order, was, it must be admitted, far above mediocrity; and the advantages which he thus derived from nature, were signally improved by extensive reading and unwearied research. As a natural historian he stands avowedly in the first rank; and the avidity with which his works on this subject were received by the public, proves how successfully he had laboured in the hitherto novel attempt to communicate a popular character to this branch of literature. As a writer in general, his talents were singularly prolific, but, at the same time unequal; and, if he is not to be classed with those authors who have fathomed the depths of reasoning, or ascended the heights of science, it may be because the subjects he selected were not of such a nature as to demand the gravity of philosophical investigation. His manner of treating them, too, had a manifest tendency rather to the orna-

* See pages 15, 16, and 103, and also 110 for an affecting allusion to the loss of his daughter.

mental than the profound; he was content to amuse and instruct where he had no temptation to be abstruse. Works of a zoological or topographical nature,—and such for the most part are Pennant's,—are, of all, perhaps, the most susceptible of that lively and agreeable illustration, in which the subject of this memoir appears to have delighted; and it is no mean praise to be able to say of him, that, in this species of writing, he has presented a model, which none of his imitators have surpassed. It is peculiarly his merit, as there has been already occasion to notice, that, "as a tourist, he was the first to enliven the dryness of topographical research with historical and biographical anecdote, and to illustrate description with the decorations of the pencil*;" and, in this point of view, his native country must ever be particularly beholden to him. With a true spirit of patriotism he first disclosed the popular road to those literary treasures, which had hitherto been concealed within the mountains of Wales.

It must not be forgotten, in estimating the literary character of the writer before us, that he was also a poet. His offerings, however, at the shrine of the muses, at least such as have seen the light, were but few†; but some of them would not have disgraced a loftier name. However, it is on his more known productions that his reputation

* These are the words of the writer of the Preface to the edition of Pennant's "Tour from London to the Isle of Wight," published in 1801. With reference to the "decorations of the pencil" here alluded to, it may be of interest to state, that his various works are embellished by considerably more than eight hundred plates, from which we may form an estimate of the benefit the art of engraving must have derived from his single exertions.

† Three of these may be seen in his "Literary Life," pp. 11, 15, and 20. Of these the "Ode, occasioned by a Lady professing an attachment to Indifference," may be noticed as particularly indicative of the writer's poetical talents.

must rest; and, with respect to these, we are told that his powers of composition were remarkable for their celerity, and that he rarely corrected his first thoughts*, which proves at once the retentiveness of his memory, and the facility with which he could call into operation the stores of his mind. In a word, in whatever view we regard the distinguished individual whose life is here so faintly and imperfectly traced, we cannot but consider him as shedding a lustre on the land of his birth, in proportion with the acknowledged benefits which he conferred on the great republic of letters.

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* See the Preface to the third volume of the "Outlines of the Globe."

REV. PETER ROBERTS.

The difficulty of writing with propriety on events of recent occurrence has always been acknowledged. The historian has rarely been successful in describing, with impartial fidelity, the transactions of his own times; nor has the biographer always drawn with accuracy the portrait of his cotemporaries. Yet, however true this may be as affects the opinions either of the biographer or historian, to which private friendship in one case, or political prejudices in the other, might naturally give a wrong bias, it can scarcely be of any weight, as it regards the narration of facts. On the contrary, the authority of the writer in this respect must always be in proportion with the opportunities he has had of witnessing what he relates; and in this view it is that, in the lives of eminent men, the testimony of their cotemporaries, especially of such as have had a personal knowledge of them, becomes peculiarly valuable.

These preliminary remarks have been suggested by the following memoir, which is from the pen of a gentleman, who had the happiness of being intimately acquainted with the learned individual to whom it is dedicated. It details, with a felicitous ease of style, the more prominent events of his life, and is wholly exempt from those false colourings, with which the partiality of friendship, or the blindness of admiration, too often supplies the place of truth. As our own resources would not enable us to offer any thing of equal authenticity with the following "plain unvarnished tale," the reader will not regret, that it has been

adopted as an ornament to the pages of the CAMBRIAN PLUTARCH*.

The late Rev. Peter Roberts was born in the parish of Rhiwabon, in the county of Denbigh, about the year 1760. His father, John Roberts, was the younger son of a freeholder in that parish, and descended from a family, which had, for many generations, occupied their small domain, called Tai'n-y-Nant, without any material change in their circumstances. He was by trade a clock-maker, and established himself in that business, first at his native village, Rhiwabon, but afterwards removed to Wrexham. He was an honest and respectable man; but, though he enjoyed the means, he inconsiderately neglected the opportunity of establishing his family in a state of comfortable competency. His wife was nearly allied to the ancient family of the Middletons of Chirk Castle.

Their son and only child, Peter Roberts, was sent, at a very early age, to the grammar-school at Wrexham, which was then in great repute, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Davis, afterwards rector of Llanarmon Dyfryn Ceiriog. His early proficiency was very conspicuous, and gave, even at that time, no obscure indication of his subsequent celebrity. He employed his leisure hours upon various mechanical curiosities, for which he displayed a remarkable genius. Of music he continued, at all times, to be an enthusiastic admirer, and he was enabled, when very young, to enjoy his favourite amusement, by playing upon a dulcimer of his own construction. He also attempted to make a telescope.

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* This memoir first appeared in the *Cambro-Briton*; and we wish we were at liberty to disclose the name of the writer. As it is, however, we have only to add, that it is here republished, with but very few variations, and those merely verbal. One or two trivial passages are omitted.

Having remained at Wrexham until the age of fifteen or sixteen, he removed to the grammar school at St. Asaph, and, as is generally understood, in the double character of pupil and assistant. The school at St. Asaph was then in a very flourishing state, under the superintendence of the Rev. Peter Williams, afterwards vicar of Bettws Alergeley, and, besides a great number of pupils from the neighbouring counties, could boast of several from the sister kingdom of Ireland. To some of the latter, John Roberts was, naturally enough from his situation in the school, engaged as a private tutor; and a circumstance happened at this time, which gave a more permanent character to the connexion between him and his young pupils.

Dr. Usher, then a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and afterwards professor of astronomy in that university, came over at this period to North Wales, and resided there for several months. By some accident now unknown, or, perhaps, by direct information from the Irish scholars, he became acquainted with Peter Roberts, and, as he highly appreciated his character and talents, strongly encouraged him to transfer his studies, under his auspices, to the university of Dublin. With this proposal, which, in his financial difficulties, presented, probably, the only chance of an university education, and obviously opened a wide field to his literary ambition, our young student readily complied, and, entering as sizar in that celebrated seat of learning, very soon attracted the notice, and secured the permanent esteem, of his superiors in the college*.

It is understood, that his old pupils from St. Asaph, as

* "A few months before his decease," the writer here adds, "he expressed most strongly to one of his friends a deep sense of gratitude for the kindness which he had experienced from the senior fellows in his youth."

they successively entered the university, availed themselves of his private tuition. Astronomy and the oriental languages were, at this time, his favourite studies, and, such was his proficiency in the former, that his patron, Usher, contemplated him as well qualified to succeed him in the professorship. Mr. Roberts himself had also considered the astronomical chair as the great object of his ambition; but a different arrangement took place when the vacancy actually happened, and the office was bestowed upon another person, who, with whatever feelings we may reflect on the disappointment of our learned countryman, must be universally admitted to be well deserving of this high honour. It is believed, that this disappointment, the first of a serious nature the subject of this memoir had ever experienced, was peculiarly painful to him.

About the commencement of the French Revolution he travelled in the south-west of France for the benefit of his health, and remained, for some time, at the waters of Barreges, near the Pyrennées. Of this tour he left among his papers a manuscript journal, which, however, is not sufficiently interesting, nor does it appear to have been ever intended, for publication. Returning to Ireland, he was employed as private tutor in several families. He was afterwards engaged to superintend the education of the present Lord Lanesborough, and his cousin, now Colonel Latouche. Them he eventually accompanied to Eton, where his character became more generally known, and he had an opportunity of acquiring many valuable friends, among whom he used particularly to enumerate Bishop Douglas, Mr. Bryant, and Dr. Heath. By these and other friends he was encouraged to publish his "Harmony of the Epistles," the preparation of which had occupied many years of his life; and, through their recommendation, the University of Cambridge printed the work at their own expense. The high character of

this publication, the most laborious and valuable of all his works, fully justifies the liberal patronage of the University, and will, unquestionably, transmit the author's name as an eminent scholar and divine to future ages.

When the education of his pupils was completed, he retired to his native country, subsisting upon two annuities, which he received from his former pupils, Lords Lanesborough and Bolton. His time was now at his own disposal, and this was, perhaps, the first uninterrupted possession of it, which he had ever enjoyed. The illustration of his native language, and of the ancient history of the Cymry, became now his favourite pursuits, and he certainly brought to the discussion of these subjects such powers of mind, united with such multifarious and general knowledge, as few Welshmen have evinced since the time of the celebrated Edward Llwyd. His eminent character for general literature excited an additional interest for the subjects of which he treated, and awakened, in many instances, the curiosity of those who would have turned with disgust from the works of humbler authors, and who had esteemed the investigation of the Welsh history and language as useless as it was then deemed unfashionable. To the effect of his example and labours may undoubtedly be traced much of that better taste, which now prevails in the Principality, and which we may reasonably hope to see far more widely disseminated under the auspices of the numerous societies now established for that purpose*.

Hitherto, however, though he had written much and

* The original in this place mentions merely the Cambrian Society, which, at the period when this memoir was written (1819), was the only institution of the kind in existence. There are now, however, besides the Cymmrodorion or Metropolitan Cambrian Institution, four general provincial societies, and several, of an inferior, but not less zealous character, in most of the principal towns in both divisions of Wales.

ably upon theological subjects, none of the dignities or emoluments of his profession had fallen to his share. Of Bishop Douglas's favourable intentions towards him there can be no doubt; but the death of that prelate put an end to all expectations of preferment from that quarter. Bishop Horsley also, in common with others, entertained a very high opinion of his character, and, in answer to a question hesitatingly put, whether he knew *a* Mr. Peter Roberts, quickly replied, "To be sure, I do: there is but one Peter Roberts in the world." But his first preferment was derived from Bishop Cleaver, who presented him with the living of Llanarmon—a living certainly of little value, but which he had strongly solicited, and perhaps more highly valued, because it was the preferment of his old master and friend Mr. Davies. The cold and retired situation of this place rendered it very unsuitable to his numerous bodily infirmities, and to the nervous sensibility of his mind, for which the enlivening intercourse of friendly society was now become indispensable. He therefore spent only a few of the summer months at his living, but continued to make his regular home in the town of Oswestry, in Shropshire, where he was generally respected for his literary talents and private worth.

About nine or ten years ago Lord Crewe gave him the living of Madeley, in Shropshire, and, at a later period, that distinguished patron of learning, Bishop Burgess, offered him preferment, which was respectfully declined, within the diocese of St. David's. In December, 1818, his income received a most important addition, and was, probably, rendered amply commensurate with all his wants, by the living of Halkyn, which Dr. Luxmore, Bishop of St. Asaph, gave him in exchange for Llanarmon. He removed to his new preferment in the following February,

and, being unable to procure a curate immediately, entered upon what was a new employment to him, the active duties of a parish priest. So little had he been accustomed to parochial duty, that his ministerial labours, in the course of a few months at Halkyn, exceeded, by his own account, those of his whole preceding life. In the pulpit he certainly did not excel; but this will not appear surprising, if we reflect upon his physical infirmities at this time, and that, until this late period of life, he had never preached any but a few occasional sermons. But his affability, the native benevolence of his heart, and charitable attentions to the poor, rendered him a great favourite with his parishioners.

His labours were now approaching fast to their termination, and, it may be hoped, also to their reward. He had been accustomed, for many years, to complain of his low spirits, his head-aches, and other infirmities; and his friends had in vain recommended to him more frequent exercise in the open air, as the best medicine for his bodily and mental ailments. The exertions, which the personal discharge of his duties at Halkyn called forth, seemed to have a favourable effect on his health, and he represented himself as more than usually exempt from infirmity in the latter end of the Spring of 1819. On Ascension-Day following (May 20th,) he read the service of the church without any particular inconvenience, and, having returned home, was soon afterwards called to the door by a pauper, who solicited his charity. He was in the act of administering relief, when he was stretched helpless by an apoplectic attack, and, though he lingered until the following morning, he continued speechless and apparently insensible until he expired. On his table were found several letters, one of which, directed to his patron, the Bishop of St. Asaph,

was intended to express to him the happiness he enjoyed in his new situation. So uncertain is the tenure of human happiness in our present state!

In private life Peter Roberts was in the highest degree amiable. As a companion he was distinguished by a playful cheerfulness of manner, an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, and a happy facility of communicating information to others. As a neighbour, he was remarkably kind, friendly, and charitable. His whole conduct was stamped by the most unshaken probity, which was rendered yet more interesting by a certain guileless simplicity peculiar to himself. His erudition was unquestionable, and, without any disparagement to living merit, he may be safely pronounced a more general and profound scholar than any Welshman of the present day. He was particularly skilled in Hebrew and Rabbinical learning. His "Letters to Volney" are suppose to exhibit, in the most advantageous light, the vigour of his reasoning powers, as well as his philological and scientific acquirements. As an antiquary, it must be admitted, that, in endeavouring to establish a favourite hypothesis, he was sometimes precipitate and fanciful, and that his judgment, upon such occasions, cannot be implicitly depended upon. Even his best friends must concede, that his "History of the Ancient Britons," and his "British Kings," display many proofs of inconclusive reasoning and credulous weakness. But these are only partial blemishes; and his singular learning, with the devotion of his great talents to the literature and history of Wales, will always command the esteem, and, it may confidently be added, excite the emulation of his countrymen*.

* Here closes the memoir, as transcribed from the *Cambro-Briton*; for the few observations that follow, the author of this work is himself responsible.

In addition to the works mentioned in the course of this memoir, he also published an Essay on the Origin of the Constellations—The Art of Universal Correspondence—Review of the Policy and peculiar Doctrines of the modern Church of Rome—Manual of Prophecy—Letter to Dr. Milner, on the supposed miracle of St. Winifred's Well*, and the Cambrian Popular Antiquities. Most of these serve to confirm the justice of the reputation he had generally acquired both for talents and erudition. But, of the Cambrian Popular Antiquities, one of his latest productions, if not the last of all, it must, in candour, be said, that it falls far short of the expectations that might reasonably have been excited on the occasion, whether with a view to the interesting nature of the subject, or to the acknowledged abilities of the writer. But, it is obviously a work of much haste, and apparently written, rather to set off the plates that accompany it†, than for the purpose of treating, in a full and satisfactory manner, the "popular antiquities" of Wales. Yet, sufficient merit remains in the other works of Peter Roberts to establish the fame of the writer on a sure and indestructible basis.

Besides, such of his writings as had already seen the light, he had also contemplated some others of importance, and, among these, a Hebrew Lexicon, the plan of which,

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* St. Winifred's Well is situate at Holywell, in Flintshire. During the prevalence of papal fanaticism in this country, a miraculous efficacy was ascribed to its healing virtues: and even in more modern times some instances of the delusion might be quoted. It is to one of the latest of these, perhaps the very last, that this letter has reference.

† In justice to our national customs, it should be stated, that these plates have little or no reference to the subjects to which they profess to be dedicated. They are only calculated to mislead strangers in forming their estimate of the "popular antiquities" of the principality.

when submitted to some distinguished members of the University of Oxford, received a very high commendation. But, neither this work, nor the others alluded to, had been sufficiently advanced for publication. His only production, that has been found worthy of posthumous publicity, is a translation of the "Triads of the Social State," ascribed to the ancient British lawgiver, Dyvnwal Moelmud. This has been recently published among the transactions of the Cymmrodorion or Cambrian Institution, and adds another proof to those previously in existence of the patriotic interest which the writer took in promoting the literature of his country—DYSG YR HEN GYMRY DA*.

* "The learning of the good old Cymry." DAVYDD AB GWILYM.

THE END.

J. M'Creery, Tooks-court,
Chancery-Lane, London.